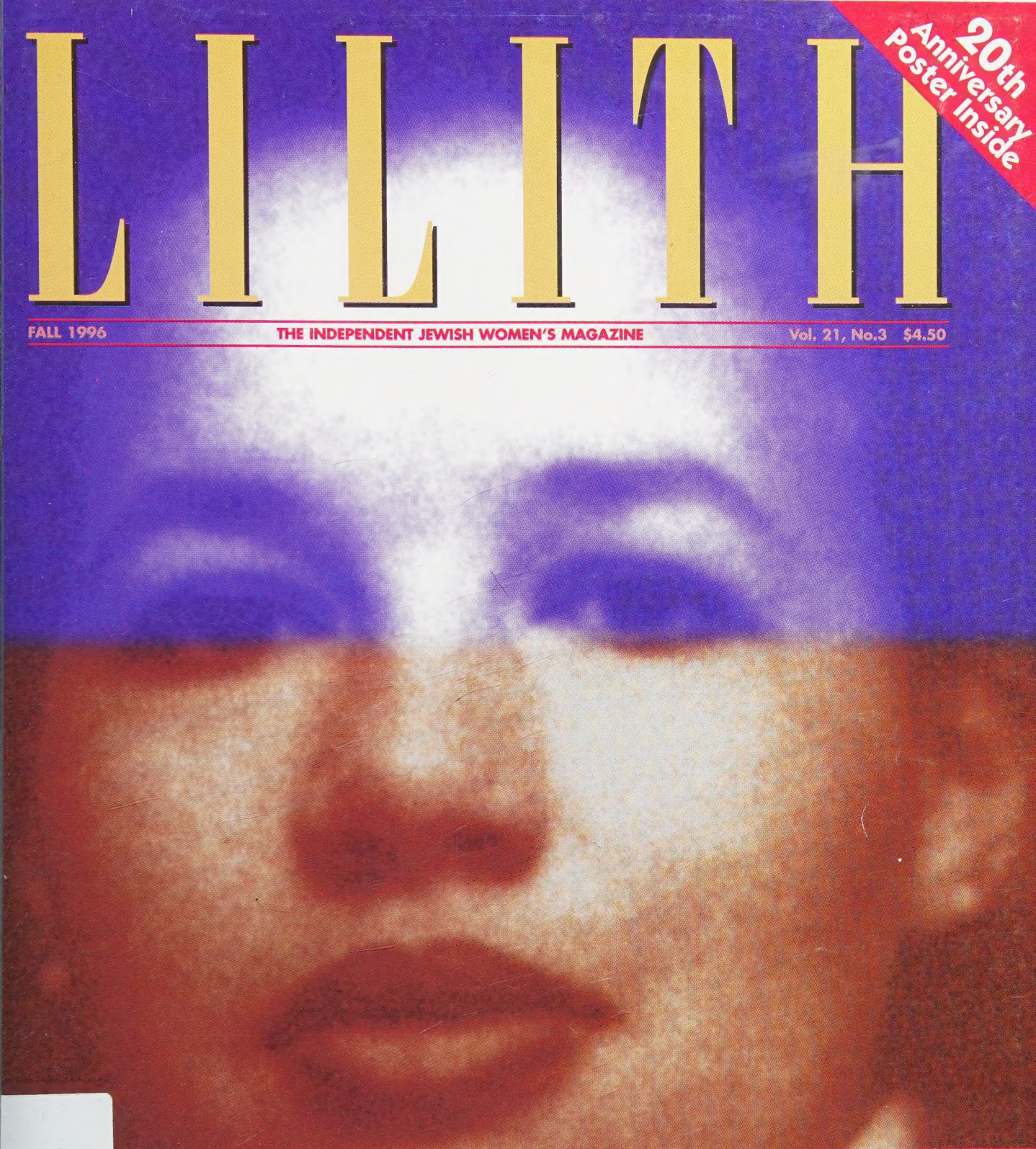
LILITH

20th Anniversary Poster Inside

FALL 1996 THE INDEPENDENT JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE Vol. 21, No.3 $4.50



A MODERN IDENTITY CRISIS: BLACK OR JEWISH?

- GRANDMA'S PEARLS: STRANDS OF ANGER AND LOSS
- FEMINISTS LOOK AT JEWISH CHILDREN'S BOOKS

GTU LIBRARY

The Rosenthal Collection invites you to Rejoice and

Blow the Shofar at the New Moon

Rosh Hodesh is
the celebration of the new moon,
once recognized by ancient rabbis as a
woman's holiday and reclaimed today as an occasion
for study, worship and creating community among women.

This contemporary image of a woman blowing the shofar has been created by studio artist Kari Minnick and is featured on our newest additions to the Rosenthal Collection. The Hebrew "Tik'u vahodesh shofar" (Blow the shofar at the new moon) has been hand calligraphed in 14 kt. gold against a backdrop of colorful fused glass.

The mezuzah, traditionally used as a reminder of following God's laws, makes a special gift with this Rosh Hashana message.
6" tall, $160

The tzedukah box is a perfect gift at the New Year when our thoughts turn to teshuvah, tefilah and tzedukah (repentance, prayer and charity).
7" tall, $160

Available at these fine Galleries or call 1-800-962-1545 to locate the gallery nearest you.

Rachael Collection, Aspen, CO • **Galeria of Sculpture**, Palm Beach, FL • **Middle Fish**, Boulder, CO
Koucky Gallery, Naples, FL & Charlevoix, MI • **The Museum Store**, Santa Monica, CA
Out of Hand, Scottsdale, AZ • **Private Collection Gallery**, W. Bloomfield, MI
Quilts Unlimited, Snowmass, CO & Charlottesville, VA • **Skillbeck Gallery**, Charlotte, NC
Strand Gallery, Margate, NJ • **Unique Accents**, Chicago & Northbrook, IL • **Vetro Marmo Arte**, Gahanna, OH
Zephyr Gallery, Lahaska, PA • **Artworks**, Park City, UT • **Elijah's Cup**, Houston, TX

The Rosenthal Collection
4142 Howard Ave., Kensington, MD 20895
Telephone 301-493-5577 FAX 301-493-5578

VOLUME 21, NO. 3

LILITH

FALL 1996

Lilith is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam. After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, the Holy One created a woman, also from the earth, and called her Lilith. Lilith said: "We are equal because we both come from the earth. . . ."
(From *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, 23a-b)

A Jewish Feminist Take on Jewish Children's Books

We've rounded up Roseanne (yes, really!), Letty Cottin Pogrebin and a whole slew of other women—authors, performers, children's book mavens—to move us beyond sugar & spice to what they've loved (or shrunk from) in the Bible, The Diary of Anne Frank, Cinderella (not Jewish) and the steamy grown-up novels they'd read on the sly.

PLUS: A selected list of which books rated high on the Jewish scale, but lost points for no feminism, and vice versa.

12

5 My Grandmother's Pearls

a memoir by Ellen Rosenberg Portnoy

A strand of pearls becomes a strand of memory which knots together thievery, resentment, and the sorrow of a Holocaust survivor trying to correct his past. The granddaughter finds it all out on her Junior year in Israel.

7 The Carpenter and His Daughter

by Jill Hammer

(OR: The Carpenter and Her Father.) A parable for the New Year and after, all about learning to separate, and discovering what happens to a daughter if you please. And if you don't please.

19 From the Conversation at the Breakfast Table

a poem by Carol Davis

21 "Are You Black or Are You Jewish?" Resisting the Identity Challenge

by Sarah Blustain

The children of those black-Jewish marriages forged in the halcyon days of the 60's Civil Rights movement have come of age. They talk here about their Jewish mothers, their pain at having to choose an identity, and the confusion they feel about a society that denies them their double birthright.

Lilith's Lens on Jewish History: Where We Were, Where We Are

On LILITH's 20th anniversary . . . a first-time-ever pull-out poster on 6,000 years of Jewish women's history.

From the date our mythological foremother Lilith fled the Garden of Eden, to her return two decades ago as a magazine, here is a visual representation to remind you of the quantity of Jewish women's scholarship, activism, spiritual exploration and general beautification of the Jewish world that has taken place simultaneously with LILITH Magazine's life on this planet.

30 Mediawatch

Just when you thought it was safe to read the papers . . . LILITH brings you "The Goy Next Door," Posing as Penthouse and other recent press coverage.

p.23

40 Liberating God With a Pink Magic Marker

by Ilana Stanger

Artist Helene Aylon's visual midrash on Genesis, in which she edits misogyny, patriarchy and other "cruelty" from the text.

DEPARTMENTS

2 From the Editor

3 Kol Ishah—News of Jewish Women Around the World

- "Girl," the renegade referent, returns
- College students take on domestic violence
- A cyberguide to soft spots and hot spots on the Web
- Recipes for success from a scholar
- Breakthrough in Bosnia
- "Genesis: A Living Conversation"—LILITH's preview guide to the TV series

32 Reviews

LILITH looks at feminist historiography and a new Jewish women's literary magazine

33 Letters to the Editor

Single motherhood, plenty to wail about at the Western Wall, incest ignored, and other responses from our readers

36 The Creative Edge

Arts and crafts you can order

38 Tsena Rena

LILITH's indispensible resources: what to learn, where to go, how to lead, etc.

ver photo of Elinor Tatum by James Gilbert

FROM THE EDITOR

This column introduces the first of four issues of LILITH which will mark our 20th anniversary season. As a kickoff, we're giving you a present: a pull-out poster with a quick review of Jewish women's history for the past several thousand years, highlighting some of the extraordinary events that have taken place in the universe during the two decades LILITH has been publishing.

Here's a brief then-and-now review, to indicate the sheer *quantity* of the changes women have wrought in two decades:

•Art: When LILITH debuted in 1976, New York's Jewish Museum had no solo contemporary women's work exhibited; in 1996, 11 out of the 23 artists in the acclaimed "Too Jewish?" exhibit are women.

•Books: In 1976, giant book purveyor J. Levine Books in New York stocked on its shelves 3 feet of books relating to Jewish women; this year, a tape-measure marks off 16 feet, 8 inches—and most of these are books *by women* about women.

•Women rabbis: In 1976 there were 3 women ordained as Reconstructionist rabbis and 1 in the Reform movement; by 1996, scorecard for the total number of women rabbis reads: Reconstructionist, 73, Reform, 259, Conservative 70.

•Feminist seders: In 1976, there were two or three private feminist seders held in the U.S. and Israel; the participants adored them and other women yearned to be invited. For Pesach 1996, LILITH received reports of more than 250 *community* feminist seders being held all over the world, open to all women.

All this creative thinking has helped to ensure women's stake in Judaism—not just women's participation in Jewish life, but our investment in the process by which Jewish life is defined, from Orthodox women scholars who are prepared to make decisions in Jewish religious law to women using their financial contributions to Jewish organizations as a spur to a more equitable distribution of power in the Jewish polity.

I often remind my lecture audiences that we're living in a remarkable time; we are witnessing (and participating in) an explosion of Jewish women's scholarship. The timeline poster suggests some of these riches: original books, anthologies, academic and popular articles on a whole range of Jewish women's issues. And then there are the college courses, informal discussion groups, adult education programs, feminist activities for Jewish summer camps and more. Along with this flowering of Jewish women's learning has been the equally transformative efflorescence of Jewish women's artisanship. In the 20 years that LILITH has been publishing, female artists and artisans have been amplifying the ways women (and men) approach Jewish ritual, a beautification of the acts we perform as Jewish women entirely in keeping with the goal of making a mitzvah more aesthetic (and therefore more pleasing).

The transformation probably began with women who wove lovely, original *tallitot* for *men* to wear at prayer. Then came the designs of prayer shawls for women, some even with slits so you could nurse a baby while *davening*. And now: handmade wedding *huppahs* have become canopies over the marriage bed. A *tallit* for a bat mitzvah girl is created from the mother's and aunts' wedding dresses. A Passover Kos Miriam, as a parallel to the cup of wine for Elijah, commissioned by LILITH's editor Rabbi Susan Schnur to accompany an article on a new Passover ritual, is in the permanent collection at the Jewish Museum. LILITH's Creative Edge department, which began in 1991 as a locus of information on feminist Judaica, has more than doubled, and we have now started a registry (check it out in this issue's Creative Edge) to help connect the makers of rituals objects with their users.

That there's much more to be done goes without saying, and creating beautiful ritual, and accompanying artifacts, does not address directly certain basic inequities in Jewish life. The next three issues of LILITH in this landmark year will examine where we've been and help map out some of the territory we have yet to traverse. In the meantime, rejoice in how far we've come!

Susan Weidman Schneider

Editor-in-Chief
SUSAN WEIDMAN SCHNEIDER
Editor
SUSAN SCHNUR
Managing Editor
NAOMI DANIS
Associate Editor
SARAH BLUSTAIN
Fiction Editor
FAYE MOSKOWITZ
Poetry Editor
ALICIA OSTRIKER
Advertising Manager
LESLIE HOLLIS MARGULIES
Design Director
BARBARA TAFF /STUDIO 8
Associate Art Director
BRAD HAMANN /STUDIO 8
Interns
JESSICA B. BAKER
RACHEL D. KLIEGMAN
SARA N.S. MEIROWITZ
ILANA STANGER

Board of Directors
FRANCES BRANDT
BARBARA B. DOBKIN
YVETTE GRALLA
DEBORAH FULLER
FRANCINE KLAGSBRUN
BRENDA BROWN LIPITZ
NATALIE PELAVIN
RACHEL JOSEFOWITZ SIEGEL

Contributing Editors
DIANA BLETTER, E.M. BRONER, NINA BETH CARDIN, ELAINE S. COHEN, SUE LEVI ELWELL, REENA SIGMAN FRIEDMAN, RELA GEFFEN, BLU GREENBERG, JUDITH HAUPTMAN, HARRIET LERNER, ANN LAPIDUS LERNER, AUDREY FRIEDMAN MARCUS, JUDITH PLASKOW, NESSA RAPOPORT, SANDY E. SASSO, MARY CAHN SCHWARTZ, AMY STONE.

LILITH magazine is made possible in part through the generosity of the individuals and foundations who make tax deductible contributions to LILITH Publications, Inc.

Sustainers: Frances Brandt, Brenda Brown Lipitz, Deborah Fuller, Paula Gottesman, Yvette Gralla, New York UJA Federation, Anne and Harry Reicher Foundation, Charles H. Revson Foundation, Nicki Tanner
Sponsors: Jan Aronson
Friends: Judith Chapman, Terry S. Fagen, Joel F. Glazier, Paula Nelson, Natalie Pelavin, Nat Saks Jewish Educational Fund
Donors: Rabbi Michael Cohen, Janice D. Gaines, Michelle Gluck, Co Klopper, Estelle Markowitz, Sharon Gaidemak O'Neil, Religious Sch Students of Temple Beth El of Petersburg, Florida, Jeanne Barnett Saletan, Ra Marna Sapsowitz, Anita S. Steiner, Joan A. Weissman

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual subscriptions $18/4 issues; institutions $24/ 4 issues. In Canada add $6/year; other overseas add $8/year. (US funds only). Single copies $5, prepaid. Change of address, or delivery problems: send correspondence with subscription label to: LILITH, Dept. LIL, P. O. Box 3000, Denville, NJ 07834, or call 800-783-4903 or 212-757-0818.

RETAILERS: Contact any of these distributors to carry LILITH: DeBoer's (201-667-9300), Fine Print (800-874-7082), Ingram (800-627-6247), Koen Distributors (609-235-4444), L-S Distributors (415-873-2094) or Small Changes (206-382-1980).

LILITH is published by Lilith Publications, Inc., a non-profit organizati
Copyright © Lilith Publications, Inc. 1996. All rights reserved under internati al and Pan American Conventions.
Associate member American Jewish Pr Association. Indexed in Index to Jewish Periodicals. Available from Univer Microfilms International.

LILITH occasionally makes its mailing list available to organizations or publ ers. If you do not want to receive such mail, please send label & request to Denville address above.

"WOMAN'S VOICE." TRADITIONALLY, THE VOICE OF THE JEWISH WOMAN WAS NOT TO BE HEARD IN PUBLIC, LEST IT AROUSE MEN. NO MORE. THESE PAGES ARE MEANT FOR NEWS ABOUT JEWISH WOMEN, IN OUR OWN STRONG VOICES.

"SCHOLAR IN THE KITCHEN"

The original waves of the feminist movement swept many women out of the kitchen with the tide, t running along the edge of the sea is e Scholar in the Kitchen, and she is claiming her territory.

Created by Ma'yan, the Jewish omen's Project of the JCC on the pper West Side in New York City, the holar in the Kitchen program invites e professional woman to return to the chen—and to bring her expertise ng.

At a recent gathering, Zvia Ginor, ssistant Professor of Jewish Literare at the Jewish Theological Semiry, served as bridge between research d cooking. Speaking to a Ma'yan auence about poems and pastry, she inrspersed her discussion of Jerusalem-literary-metaphor with remarks on erusalem kugel," passing around poy while the noodle dish, featuring ramelized sugar and black pepper, hich she baked in Ma'yan's kitchen. he link between the two, says Ginor, the Jewish woman who does it all.

Being at the center, however, is not easy, according to Ginor, author of *omenswell* and *Beyond the Legend: A udy of the Poetry of Abba Kovner* (in Hebrew, published by Hakibbutz Hameuchad). The challenge is timing. Lecturing on poetry, Ginor turned her back to the audience to caramelize the noodles, then turned her back on the kugel to give instructions on how to bake. The counterpoint, she comments, "could have been a hilarious text" itself.

Where the kitchen used to be a gathering place for women to cook and tell stories, the Ma'yan kitchen has become a gathering place for women to cook and participate in a discussion with, this past season, such luminaries as food historian Joan Nathan and Professor of Government and Women's Studies at Smith College Martha Acklesberg.

Acklesberg, who led the last of this series, braided loaves of challah with tales of radical Jewish women in the U.S. labor movement. How is a woman like a loaf of bread, she asked, recalling a billboard from the 70s? They both will rise.

Scholar in the Kitchen creates an intimate and undeniably feminist atmosphere, a place where women can learn a new recipe . . . for dinner, and for life.

—Rachel Kliegman

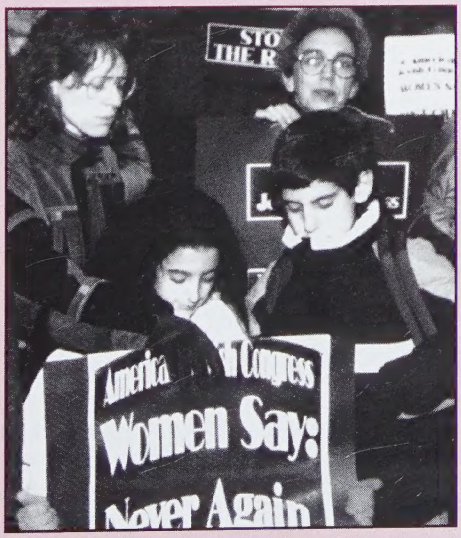
Do you want advice on bringing a Scholar in the Kitchen program to your community, as a series or a one-shot event? Contact Eve Landau at Ma'yan (212) 580-0099.

Zvia Ginor

BOSNIAN RAPES DECLARED WAR CRIMES

The United Nations Tribunal at The Hague this summer indicted Bosnian Serb military and police offiin connection with the rapes of Musvomen in the Bosnian war. This legal n marks the success of a campaign ed by the Commission for Women's ility of the American Jewish Con; and some 40 other organizations, d at prosecuting rapes and forced imnation of Muslim women and girls in ia as crimes of war. It is the first time story a court has recognized rape in me as something other than an indial's aberrant behavior.

WE gathered a coalition of human s, religious, ethnic, relief and en's organizations in 1993 to urge mentation and prosecution of cases pe and forced impregnation in the former Yugoslavia as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The campaign also was intended to provide medical, psychological and social services for the victimized Muslim women.



The CWE commended Richard Goldstone, the tribunal's chief prosecutor, for recognizing "that these gender-related crimes had to be given a primary place in international law as crimes against humanity and prosecuted accordingly." Mr. Goldstone, however, is expected to be succeeded in October by Louise Arbour, a Canadian judge who has been criticized for her reluctance to take a hard-line stance on prosecuting Nazi war criminals and rapists in a Canadian prison. The world will be watching to see how Ms. Arbour handles her new global responsibility.

—Sara N.S. Meirowitz

Campus And Community Against Domestic Violence

Jewish women around the world have created shelters and safe houses with kosher kitchens for battered women and their children. Now growing numbers of college student activists are helping to shatter the silence often surrounding domestic violence in the Jewish community.

At Washington University in St. Louis, a presentation on the subject opened with the sounds of a little girl trying to help her mother, who was being beaten by the girl's father. The gripping audio recording of this 911 call seized the attention of the 45 audience members, who then broke up into groups, each with a speaker on specific topics: legal issues, the Jewish community's response, men's perspectives and the experiences of a shelter worker.

The program was coordinated through the Campus Jewish Relations Council by Rebecca Machtinger, who hopes to continue publicizing this issue by organizing a Silent Witness project in the spring. The Silent Witnesses—bright orange life-size cut outs of women—that inspired Machtinger were set up at a mall by the National Council of Jewish Women and bore cards that told their stories: how they were murdered by men who, supposedly, loved them.

At Brown University, Jessica Zellner last year founded the Committee for the Awareness and Prevention of Jewish Domestic Violence and launched its programming with a panel discussion featuring a Jewish survivor of domestic abuse, a lawyer and a social worker in Jewish Family Services. Other events have included a cross-community panel discussion with women of varied ethnicities and religions during Women's Herstory Month and a vigil held on the campus green focusing on multicultural experiences and responses. In conjunction with Queer Pride month, the group co-sponsored a program on domestic violence in same-sex relationships. The committee has also sponsored programs educating the general Providence Jewish community about domestic abuse.

Zellner's committee is planning to circulate a survey in the Providence community to assess the prevalence of domestic violence among Jews. Since "don't ask, don't tell" often seems to be the policy among Jews who are victims of domestic violence, exact statistics are hard to come by. However, studies estimate that at least 15% to 20% of Jewish women suffer abusive behavior at the hands of husbands and boyfriends. The astounding statistic is that Jewish women tend to stay in abusive relationships 5 to 7 years longer than non-Jewish women, highlighting the silence and denial that surround this ordeal in a community which prides itself on its sound "family values" and *shalom bayit* (peace in the home).

An innovative sexual assault education skit performed for leaders of local Jewish youth groups provided Zellner's committee with disturbing statistics. Evaluations completed by the teens revealed that even Jewish youth are not exempt from sexual assault and harassment. *All* of the girls responded that they or someone they knew had been assaed or harassed at a youth conventi while only one-tenth of the boys w aware that such incidents were occurr at these "innocent" gatherings.

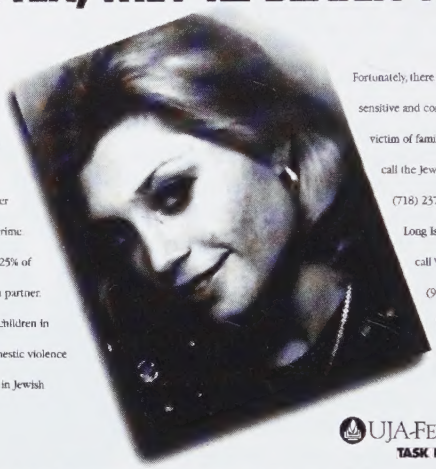
The Committee is not acting alo Jewish Women International, wh Zellner worked for a summer bef starting her program, has designate weekend in October as Annual Dome Violence Shabbat. Synagogues and H lels across the country receive pack that include sample sermons, statis and other inform tion to help rab and commun leaders speak on this issue. Brown Hillel October the s mons and Oneg Shabbat cussion addres this theme.

In a developm that marks the s nificant posit the issue dome violence has tal in the Jewish co munity, on cam and now in an a demic field, the partment of wo en's studies Brandeis Unive ty has devoted one of its three course an Internship in the Prevention of D mestic Violence. In this course stude receive full credit for volunteering in community, either at a shelter, a hosp or a police station for six hours a we they then meet for two hours each w to discuss theory, readings and their c experiences in the field.

—Lisa Lep

Your synagogue or Hillel can particip in the Annual Domestic Violence Sh bat. For further information on hov create events to address violence aga women in their homes, contact Jes Zellner at (617) 354-2493. To rec Jewish Women International's mate on domestic violence, call (202) 8 1300 or (800) 343-2823.

JEWISH WOMEN ARE OFTEN LOVED TO DEATH. TOO OFTEN, THEY'RE BEATEN TO DEATH.



You are looking at Galina Komar. She was murdered by her boyfriend on February 12th. Blima Zitrenbaum, another Jewish woman, was beaten unconscious earlier this month and her husband has been charged with the crime. Sometime in their lives, an estimated 25% of American women will be abused by a partner. And in about half of those cases, the children in the family are also being abused. Domestic violence doesn't discriminate. It's as prevalent in Jewish homes as in any other.

Fortunately, there is a caring community that understands, is sensitive and concerned. If you, or someone you know, are a victim of family violence, there is help. In New York City, call the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services at (718) 237-1337. In Nassau/Suffolk County, call EE.G.S./ Long Island Services at (516) 496-7550. In Westchester, call Westchester Jewish Community Services at (914) 949-7699. And for legal help, call the New York Legal Assistance Group at (212) 750-0800.

It could be a matter of life or death.

UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK
TASK FORCE ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

LONG ISLAND JEWISH MEDICAL CENTER • JEWISH ASSOCIATION FOR SERVICES FOR THE AGED • SELFHELP COMMUNITY SERVICES INC. • EE.G.S. • JEWISH BOARD OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES • BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION • JEWISH CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF NY • WESTCHESTER JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES • NEW YORK LEGAL ASSISTANCE GROUP • THE EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE • MONTEFIORE MEDICAL CENTER • SAMUEL FIELD Y • SHALOM TASKFORCE • BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER • BROOKDALE CENTER ON AGING • NYANA • METROPOLITAN NY COORDINATING COUNCIL ON JEWISH POVERTY • JEWISH WOMEN INTERNATIONAL

Linking Up With the Web

Searching for Jewish women's information on the World Wide Web can feel like walking through a house full of hallways. "Resource lists" of links dominate the landscape—each one pointing to a dozen other lists—and the unwary user can wander endlessly in circles without hitting any real content.

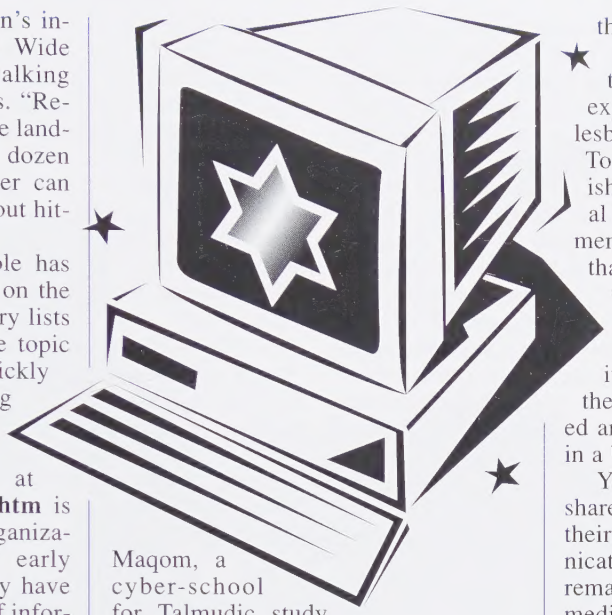
The Jewish world as a whole has carved out a powerful presence on the Web. The popular Yahoo directory lists more than 450 entries under the topic "Judaism" along with several slickly produced sites that stand waiting to guide you through a cornucopia of religion, culture, arts and politics. ["Hot Max" at **http://www. jcn18.com/jhot00.htm** is a fine example.] Orthodox organizations were among the savvy early adopters of this technology; they have produced an enormous volume of information on religious study and observance, from their own traditionalist perspective.

Among these rich resources, Jewish feminist concerns receive only spotty coverage. While some delightful individual efforts can be found, few sites take full advantage of the medium's potential. On the information highway, a feminist joyrider might experience many dead ends and technological flat tires. Typical is the Kansas University Jewish Feminists' site, a page abandoned at birth that floats sentence fragments like trial balloons: "The Jewish Feminists of KU (JFKU) is a group formed to . . ."; nothing more.

For surfers ready to brave these choppy waters, the place to start is Adina Levin's page of Jewish Feminist Resources [**http://world.std.com/~alevin/jewishfeminist.html**]. Levin's well-organized lists feature the arts, religion, history, media and Jewish organizations. The site provides links to other Web pages, plus brief text profiles, reviews and reading lists.

One relatively vibrant sector of Web activity is the Jewish lesbian community. "Nice Jewish Girls," a chatty, personal site laid out in retina-numbing purple [**http://www.zoom.com/ personal/staci/njg.htm**], includes—surprise!—a list of links to other resources. Creator Staci Schoenfeld is also planning a monthly "'Zine for Queer Jewish Women," for which submissions are invited.

For religious scholarship, check out



Maqom, a cyber-school for Talmudic study run by Rabbi Judith Abrams, Ph.D. [**http://www.compassnet.com/~maqom**]. Abrams, author of *The Women of the Talmud*, promises "spiritually enlightening and intellectually honest study of Jewish texts."

While Jewish feminists remain somewhat quiet on the aggressively public Web, they are more active in the semi-private realm of e-mail discussion groups. E-mail lists thrive for feminists, lesbians and women rabbis. These groups foster frank discussion, but at the expense of access; that is, membership tends to be restrictive. (A typical message reads: "This list is expressly for those who identify as lesbian and bisexual Jewish women. To those who identify as straight Jewish women or men, lesbian or bisexual Jewish men, non-Jewish women or men, or anyone else left over, we ask that you respect the charter and private nature of this space.")

One of the benefits all these online resources share is their ability to transcend geography. Over the network, Jewish women in isolated areas have the chance to participate in a broader community.

Yet for now, these diverse arenas share a common limitation as well: their contents could be easily communicated on the printed page. The field remains wide open for an online, multimedia exploration of women's music, for example. Or for interactive tools to tap users' own creativity. Once resources like these are developed, the listmakers will really have something to point to.

—Laura Wattenberg

Laura Wattenberg is a partner in Triangle Street Diversions, an Internet development company that can be found at www.triangle-st.com.

And in case you're not getting enough e-mail...

For those who lack full Web access, prefer passively receiving e-mail to actively surfing the Net, or just want to engage in some lively debate, e-mail lists are a great resource. These lists are sent out (usually) daily and consist of news briefs and discussion by subscribers.

Some of our favorites:

• The **TOR-CH (Living Torah: Tradition & the World from the Perspective of Conservitive Judaism)** digest is a fascinating list for all liberal Jews. Published by the Jewish Theological Seminary, its members debate at length on subjects ranging from women wearing *tallitot* to homosexual marriage. Subscribe by sending an e-mail with the message "subscribe TOR-CH <your name>" to LISTSERV@ JTSA.edu

• The National Hillel Council moderates several lists for college students. **hillel-women** is particularly interesting, with discussions on feminist and Jewish issues. Subscribe by e-mailing listproc@shamash.nysernet.org with the message "subscribe hillel-women <your name>"

• For those interested in the latest news from Israel, the Israeli consulate puts out a daily digest of current news on their **Israeline**. You can subscribe by emailing listserv@pankow.inter.net.il with the message "subscribe israeline <your name>"

—S.M.

GENESIS REVISITED

Coming soon to a television set near you is a chance to eavesdrop on conversations about Bible stories you may not have thought about since Hebrew school. "Genesis: A Living Conversation" is a ten-part series on public television premiering October 16. A brief passage from Genesis is read aloud, then a rotating assortment of talkative clergy and theologians, social scientists, poets, artists and literary critics freely explores its themes and direction. The series includes some of the relatively few biblical stories to name women—for example, Sarah and Hagar ("A Family Affair," airing initially on November 17). For a feminist audience, what makes the shows special is the presence of equal numbers of women and men in the conversation. Pay special attention to the unfailingly acute biblical and literary scholar Avivah Zornberg, who responds to the Cain and Abel story ("The First Murder") with a web of literary allusion and a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew original, then adds, "God makes man from clay. The object teaches the creator."

Some of the women have already appeared in LILITH: Orthodox feminist writer Blu Greenberg, psychologist Carol Gilligan, philosopher and novelist Rebecca Goldstein, novelist Faye Kellerman and composer and dramaturge Elizabeth Swados. This series provides a chance to hear other voices as well. Women to watch include Elaine Pagels (*The Gnostic Gospels*, *The Origin of Satan*), Renita Weems, Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Roberta Hestenes, President of Eastern College in Pennsylvania, and novelist Bharati Mukherjee. Phyllis Trible, the Christian feminist Bible scholar, after a polite discussion of Potiphar's wife and her false accusation of rape, jumps in with, "I can't take any more of this. This story is misogynist!" And when moderator Bill Moyers asks (in the final segment, December 16), "By misogyny you mean—?" Trible turns and declares, "*Hatred* of women." And this is on network television!

In the "Genesis" series we approach the divergent ways in which women and men see the Bible's human dilemmas, and how Jews, Christians and Muslims approach the same text. Especially instructive for those who will want to organize their own groups using the program's format is that the camerawork reveals the first secret of good conversation: on the screen we see closeups not just of the talking heads, but of the attentively listening heads as well.

—Susan Weidman Schneider

"Genesis: A Living Conversation" is worth watching with your women friends, Rosh Hodesh groups, classmates, synagogue sisterhood committees or adult education learners. To help you carry on the conversation after you've turned off the set, LILITH has created a packet entitled "Meet the Matriarchs"—reprints of LILITH articles on biblical women and articles from Christian and Muslim feminist perspectives as well. To order, send $12 to LILITH, 250 West 57 Street, New York 10107. E-mail your credit-card order to lilithmag@aol.com or fax it to (212) 757-5705. And over the next several issues LILITH will publish, with support from the Charles H. Revson Foundation, Bible stories interpreted by Jewish, Christian and Muslim women. Stay tuned.

THIS HEARD ON THE STREET: GRRRRRRRL!

Just when feminists thought they had wrestled out of common parlance the word "girl" as a synonym for "woman," the renegade referent has returned—revised and ready for a rematch. No longer just a badge of youth or a signal of silliness, servitude, or class difference, "Girl!" has almost become a mark of pride in one's gender, a sarcastic scoff at those who for centuries patronized females with its use.

Homosexuals may refer to each other as "queer." African-Americans use the word "nigger" with each other as a term of affection. The latest crossover from unacceptable slur to honorific? Women today are resurrecting the word "Girl!"

First used in the thirteenth century as any child, male or female, by the sixteenth century the word "girl" specified female children, and 150 years later referred to a maid-servant—not only a hand around the house, but a virginal one at that—according to Jane Mills' *Womanwords, A Dictionary of Words About Women* (Henry Holt & Co., Inc., 1989). This definition held sway into the twentieth century, expanding to include any female worker at all, but still sometimes carrying its eighteenth century link to "prostitute" or "mistress."

Although *The Bias-Free Word Finder* (Beacon Press, 1991)) still claims that "for an outsider to refer to [women or young women] this way is unacceptable," between women the word is emerging as a defiant pass to a private club. With the mainstreaming of African-American usage–"You go, girl!" and "Girlfriend!"–"Girl!" is popping up all over the place, from T-shirts in boutiqu to the Guerrilla Girls, a feminist gro fighting for equality in the art wor Lest they be misunderstood, some mo ern users of "girl" have changed spelling. Two online examples are bergrrl and The Geek Boutique, mod ated by Nrrdgrrl, both of which sugge growl.

It is no longer used by corporate m to refer with (perhaps unwitting) con scension to his female colleagues, bu secret handshake that pronounces, " control how we are represented!" T real question is: how will we react wh the new breed of feminist man walks i the office and calls out, "Hiya, girls .

—Jessica B. Ba

Sugar & Spice – and beyond

or many of us, the books we read as children had a powerful impact on our sense of what was possible to us—females, and as Jews. To find out what some of those germinal books were, LILITH's editors asked a cross-sec- of our readers—authors, children's book editors, students, educators, performers—to tell us about a favorite k they'd read as a youngster, or read to a child. We especially wanted to know which books were subversive (in best sense) and which inspired a shock of recogniition, that sidelong glance at one's own reflection . . .

—edited by Naomi Danis

Girls who thought about sex

As a child, my reading material was mainly *Little Women*, *The Bobbsey Twins*, and other stories about good Christian girls. Then I started to dip into the adult books behind the locked glass doors in the secretary desk. There I discovered *The Old Bunch* by Meyer Levin, that bawdy (for the Thirties), irreverent look at a Jewish neighborhood. I don't remember the details of the plot.

My sense is that it was totally inappropriate for an eleven-year-old. But it was the first book I had ever read about Jews and girls who thought of sex. This book was about me. I loved it.

***Barbara Brenner** has written more than 70 books for children and adults.* A Year in the Life of Rosie Bernard *is based on her experiences as the orphaned child of a religiously mixed marriage. Her latest work is* Chibi *(Clarion).*

They were all Orthodox

For years I couldn't make gefilte fish without thinking of K'tonton sitting on the chopping blade—a story [by Sadie Rose Weilerstein] I had read myself as a child and later shared with my children. *All-of-a-Kind Family,* sparking dreams of being in a large, loving family that celebrated all the holidays with joy. Rereading both books today brings a shock: their Jewishness is Orthodox in all details. Thank goodness for writers like Barbara Diamond Goldin and Nina Jaffe who compress Jewish values and modern feminist sensibilities into beautifully crafted works for the next generation.

***Deborah Brodie**, executive editor of Viking Children's Books, works on books for Preschool through Young Adult, including many with Jewish content.*

So I had to write it myself

Stories for Jewish children were few and far between 20 years ago. Some "Jeremy and Judy" stories had Jewish content, but lacked plot. Even fewer spoke to a child's feelings and experiences. We needed new stories.

I decided to try my hand at writing an *erev Yom Kippur* story that reflected the feeling of my own family getting ready for the fast. No matter how early we would begin our pre-fast meal, there was always the rush to finish and arrivie in *shul* at the prescribed time. What did the youngest member of the family think of everything? Did he really understand the concept of wearing sneakers to shul? *Sneakers to Shul* was published 18 years ago.

***Floreva G. Cohen**, an early childhood educator, is the author of* Hanukkiah for Dina, Before Shabbat Begins, *and* My Special Friend, *and the co-author of* First Steps in Learning Torah With Young Children.

Safe in America

1. *The Diary of Anne Frank*, because its writer was still a young girl and showed this safe, American Jew a different, horrendous world of the persecuted Jew. I also loved Anne's honesty about her sexuality.
2. *Little Women*, because Jo was a strong woman and a writer—which I longed to be—while considered a misfit, which I felt I was (as an intelligent girl and part of a tiny Jewish minority in town).
3. The Israeli-Jewish Jordana in Uris' *Exodus*, because of her courage and warm sexuality.

***Paula J. Caplan** is a psychologist, actor and playwright. Her books include* Don't Blame Mother, The Myth of Woman's Masochism, *and* They Say You're Crazy: How the World's Most Powerful Psychiatrists Decide Who's Normal, *on which she has based her first play.*

On Yom Kippur when my stomach growls

Each year when I fast on Yom Kippur, I think of Charlotte, the second-youngest sister of Sydney Taylor's *All-of-a-Kind Family* series. Charlotte o lasted until lunch before Mama insisted she wait until she was a big g to fast all day, but her morning of fasting was serious business both Charlotte and for me. The *All-of-a-Kind Family* girls were proud triumphantly Jewish, and they made it seem fun! When my stomach grov in the middle of my yearly fast, I conjure up Charlotte, and now that I a a big girl, I make it through to the end.

***Lisa Pilar Cowan**, 27 years old, is the daughter of authors Rabbi Rachel Cowan a the late Paul Cowan. She lives in Somerville, MA and works in an adolescent hea clinic. Reading remains a way to figure out "who I am and what I want to do."*

Something good from Hebrew school

It was 1960, and I had never heard of Chanah Senesh, a Hungarian-born poet who lived in Eretz Yisrael and parachuted behind Nazi lines in World War II. When my Hebrew school teacher handed me her biography, *Chanah Senesh* by Aharon Megged, little did I suspect that she would soon become my role model and her name my definition of a woman of valor. The picture on the book cover—of a soulful schoolgirl daydreaming of Judah Macabee said it all. I too yearned to be a he of my people and I too thought men as the embodiment of r dream. Although the book was Hebrew, a huge challenge for me made my way though every la page, driven by an urgent sense new possibilities.

***Gila Gevirtz's** most recent boo* Partners With God *(Behrm House), was written for Jewish scho children and their families. She is wr ing a series of dramatic pieces for adu and stories for children based on wom of the Bible.*

Uh oh! Babar celebrates Christmas

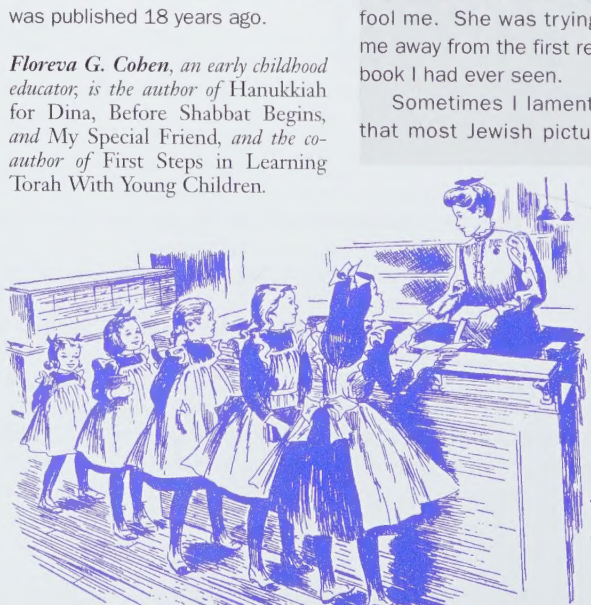
Anne Frank's soulful eyes stared straight out at me from the cover of her diary. The dust-jacket copy promised that it was a story of puberty, of adolescence and much more. Later, I looked these words up.

"Eight is too young for a book like this, choose a more appropriate book," the temple librarian advised me. That librarian couldn't fool me. She was trying to keep me away from the first real Jewish book I had ever seen.

Sometimes I lament the fact that most Jewish picture books seem locked into an idealiz middle-class America with a bub who never leaves the kitchen. T few books seem to reflect the w most American Jews live . . . a very few reflect contempora issues or modern Israel.

There is always a moment, a I swear an audible sigh, when r children, collectively and indivi ally realize that Babar, Madeli Alfie, Annie Rose, all the Americ Girls, and many other of th favorite book characters celebra Christmas. In honor of th moment, my new book (Fall '9 is about a little girl named Mee who rides a trike, loves h blankie, and also celebrat Chanukah.

***Michelle Edwards** is the author/ill trator of many children's books incl ing:* Eve and Smitty: An Iowa T Alef-Bet *and* Chicken Man. *She l in St. Paul, Minnesota.*



The much-remembered library scene fr *All-of-a-Kind-Family* by Sydney Taylor.

m *Who Will Make Kiddush?* by Barbara Pomerantz, illustration by nna Ruff, 1985

arah was my soulmate

of-a-Kind Family. I v Sydney Tay wasn't so much read as lived. a nostalgic hook, surely. e susceptible to nostalgia. Le e all of a-kind sisters (name ves. I wasn't able to buy t instead borrowed them from library. Somehow we hap ned to own this book. I read it uncountable number of times. that the various incidents— pecially the crisis of Sara sing the library book—seem ost, still to this day, like chap s from my own life. I felt though Sarah, shy and a little lost replaced, several years later, by a certain Jane and her Mr Rochester.

Rebecca Goldstein is the author Body Problem *and,*

od will have to allow it

ries by I. L. Peretz influenced me greatly when I was a child.

In "Peace at Home," Chaim, a poor porter, is assured a place in parse by his rabbi. When he asks, "And what about my wife, Rabbi?" the bi replies that his wife will become his footstool. Upon returning home, aim puts his arm around his wife lovingly and cries out, "I do not want as my footstool. I will bend down and raise you to sit with me. We will together in paradise as we do now. . . . God will have to allow it."

In "The Seven Good Years," Tovye, a poor man, meets a stranger at the rket place (Elijah the prophet in disguise) who offers help—with a catch. ye replies, "Well, dear sir, if you speak the truth and do not mock my verty—and if you are not by some chance crazy—then I will tell you mething. On important matters I always consult with my wife, Sarah. I not give you an answer unless I discuss it with her first." It was wonful for me to find echoes of what I saw and was taught at home in my dish storybooks: women were equal to men, women were smart, men could achieve what they desired.

On a lighter note, I also loved *Anne of Green Gables* for the same reas. She set her mind to get what she wanted, and got green hair in the gain. Never mind that it happened in Canada and I lived in Vilna, that I d the book in Polish, and that Anne was not Jewish!

ber Hautzig *was born in Vilna and now lives in New York City. She is hor of* The Endless Steppe: Growing Up in Siberia, *a story of her childd during the Holocaust, among other works.*

Finding Else Ury's Suitcase at Auschwitz

When I was a child in Germany in the 1930s, Else Ury was the most popular author of children's books, credited with close to forty publications. Her most popular series of books was *Nesthaekchen*, or *Fledgling*, a detailed ten-volume chronicle. The books were best-sellers, eagerly read by children growing up in the turbulent days of Hitler's rise to power.

My girlfriends and I, Jewish and non-Jewish, passed the volumes among us, making sure that we had not omitted a single one. While the first volume dealt with Nesthaekchen's life in the nursery with her dolls and toys, succeeding books took the reader through her first school year, her stay in a children's home, her teens, marriage, motherhood and finally grandmotherhood.

The narrative was uncomplicated, the adventures innocent yet appealing. What drew us to the stories? Most of us could hardly identify with the little girl with blond curls and blue eyes who lived in an affluent home. We felt that our world was no longer secure. Life had changed for the girls in Hitler's Germany. We were aware of the marching brown shirts and the growing anti-Semitism. Gentile girls were coerced into wearing the uniform of the Hitler Youth and were taught loyalty to the swastika above obedience to family.

Our lives were a far cry from the life described by Else Ury. Her books were non-political and non-denominational. Few people knew that she was Jewish.

In May of 1933, when the Nazis were ordered to burn all books by Jewish authors, hers were surely among them. Unlike other writers, such as Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Stefan Zweig and Berthold Brecht, she did not flee Germany. She remained in Berlin until January 12, 1943, when she was deported to Auschwitz with one of the last groups of Jews to leave the city. She was sixty-six years old. The *Gedenkbuch*—an extensive listing of all West German Jews who perished in the Holocaust—lists her simply as *verschollen*, disappeared.

Recently, an interest in Else Ury has surfaced in Germany. Her works are being reissued by Hoch Verlag and Stuttgart, and the Heimatmuseum—a local museum in the area where she lived in Berlin—has devoted an exhibit to her.

An article in a Berlin newspaper, *Das Tageblatt*, provides more news. Students from a high school in the suburbs of Berlin, decided—after seeing "Schindler's List"—to visit Auschwitz. There they obtained a list of Berlin residents who perished in the gas chambers. A group of girls made it their goal to inform the next-of-kin of the death dates of their family members, and Else Ury's name struck a chord with the students. They found out that the author had died on the day of her arrival at the death camp, and to their surprise, they discovered her suitcase among the confiscated properties of the victims. It was marked with her name and the compulsory addition of "Sara."

It pleases me that Else Ury is coming into her own again after close to sixty years. I only regret that the German publisher failed to note on the cover that the author was killed at Auschwitz because she was Jewish. Even as growing girls continue to enjoy the books by Louisa May Alcott and Johanna Spyri, we dare not forget the times still in the memory of those alive, when an author and her books were consigned to the flames.

—Anne L. Fox

Anne L. Fox *was born in Berlin and lives in Merion, Pennsylvania. Her most recent book,* My Heart in a Suitcase *(Valentine Mitchell, 1996), is a memoir of her life in England during the war.*

Feminist (but not Jewish)

While discussing in the LILITH office the young adult books that influenced us the most, we were all struck—despite the wide range in our ages—by the incompleteness of many of the books we'd read. Lots of our favorite books had strong female role models, but no Jewish content. Others had powerful Jewish characters, but were far too . . . well, *male*. Our literature presented us with a very compartmentalized picture: we learned how to be women, we learned how to be Jews. But where were the Jewish women?

Our nominees in the "Feminist (but not Jewish)" category were not so different from those of our respondents: *Anne of Green Gables*, *Little House on the Prairie* and *Little Women*, with their strong and somewhat iconoclastic female role models. Betty Smith's books, notably *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and *Joy in the Morning*, still reach readers today with their realistic and exhilarating stories of life in poverty-torn Brooklyn. (Despite scattered anti-Semitic passages, many of us had the sense that Francie and other characters *felt* Jewish, even when they obviously weren't. What do we make of that?)

Some of the most familiar and admired personae in modern children's literature are women, attracting a wide spectrum of adolescent readers, both male and female. Cynthia Voight's books about Dicey Tillerman and her family (*Homecoming* and *Dicey's Song*, among others) feature many powerfully nonconformist women of all generations, such as the teenage Dicey, who leads her siblings across the East Coast, and the unconventional grandmother who takes them in. Madeleine L'Engle's books, too, are replete with female role models, though very Christian; Meg and her scientist mom in the award-winning *A Wrinkle in Time* fantasy series are two.

In a category all by itself is Judy Blume's assortment of wonderful books for teens and young adults. Many girls, teetering on the edge of puberty, turn to *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* for their first exposure to issues of adolescence in a humorous and personal way. Her novels that portray young women coping with a parent's death (*Tiger Eyes*) and divorce (*It's Not The End Of The World*) have proved invaluable for young adults going through these difficult times. Several of her books also contain Jewish characters; in *Margaret*, the protagonist struggles with her parents' intermarriage as she tries to "choose" one religion in sixth grade.

— Sara N.S. Meirowitz

Jewish rabbits

Richard Adams' *Watership Down*: to the untrained eye, a beautiful and sophisticated fable about rabbits.

Fiver, naturally, is Herzl. Sensing the oncoming destruction of the home warren (Europe), our feverish visionary leads a daring few in search of a new homeland. Rejecting the invitation to join a golden diaspora of a warren, a place which dangerously distorts

true Rabbit Culture (a rather unfl tering view of America?), our r bits reach their scrubby Promis Land on the hilltop. Next: to pop late the homeland. And off go the burliest rabbit on a mission rescue some does from t oppressive (Stalinist?) regime Efrafa. (Bigwig? Also a Jew!) T homeland is achieved, all en well.

If they weren't available in t fiction I read, I invented 'e Everywhere Jews! I only wished bigger role had been given to t does.

Rachel Kadish, *a writer living Cambridge, Massachusetts, was onc LILITH intern. Her first nov* From a Sealed Room, *will be pu lished by Putnam next year.*

Searching for Jewish clues

Nancy Drew wasn't Jewish. Neither were The Bobbsey Twins, Heidi, An of Green Gables, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, Laura Ingalls Wilder, or m all time favorites, Betsy, Tacy and Tib (by Maud Hart Lovelace). In fac there was not a single Jewish child in any book that I read during th 1940's. Sydney Taylor's *All-of-a-Kind Family* wasn't published until 195 when I was fourteen and no longer looking for reading material in the ch dren's room of the public library.

Although I came from a very assimilated Jewish home, I was neve theless very aware that my background was different from my Christia classmates'. It would have meant a great deal to me to have found Jewis book friends with which I could identify and even learn more about my ow heritage.

Happily, many of the most talented and best loved children's boo writers of recent years like David Adler, Judy Blume, Barbara Cohen, Kar Hesse, Marilyn Sachs, Maurice Sendak, Jane Yolen and Jane Resh Zalben have been Jewish. Their books and the characters in them ha given new role models for today's children.

Johanna Hurwitz *is the author of more than 40 children's books includi* Once I Was a Plum Tree, The Rabbi's Girls, The Adventures of Ali Ba Bernstein, *and* Baseball Fever.

The impact of reality

When I was nine years old, I ordered a biography of Adolf Hitler from the Scholastic Book Club. I read it in one mesmerized, horrified sitting. It was my first graphic exposure to the horrors of the Holocaust, and when I finished it, I burst into tears. Nothing I read before had given me such a sense of vulnerability or peril, all based on the mere accident of having been born Jewish. I read that book many times in the next two years, perhaps with the unconscious and certainly unarticulated hope that, this time, Hitler would be stopped and the tragedy averted.

Yona Zeldis McDonough *lives in Brooklyn, New York. The author of several books for children, her biography of Anne Frank (illustrated by her mother, Malcah Zeldis) will be published by Henry Holt and Company.*

From Pearl Plants a Tree *by Jane Breskin Zalben (Simon & Schuster)*

Poor Marjorie Morningstar !

When I was a teenager, I read Herman Wouk's *Marjorie Morningstar*. Poor Marjorie! She gave her virginity away before marriage and was made to pay for her mistake. Poor me! I believed that Marjorie deserved to be punished! I also remember envying her Central Park West existence, with its horseback riding. I thought all Jewish girls were supposed to li that way, and that I had go astray with my choice of paren (working class) and my hor (Chicago).

Fran Manushkin *is the author* Latkes and Applesauce: A Hanu kah Story, The Matzah That Pa Brought Home, *and* Starlight a Candles: The Joys of the Sabba Miriam's Cup, *about the propl Miriam, will be published for Passo 1998.*

be book under my pillow

en my beloved grandmother died, I was inconsolable. However, the ok *Bubby, Me and Memories* by Barbara Pomerantz (UAHC Press, 83) was a great comfort. The book is illustrated with photos, and I ked at them over and over, amazed that there in a book was a little who looked like me. I pasted photos of me and my bubbe in the nk pages at the beginning of the book and slept with it under my pil-. I was 33 when my grandmother died, and the little girl in me will ays be grateful for having found a book that expressed her sorrow.

sléa Newman's books include several titles about Jewish girls and women and ir grandmothers: the children's book Remember That; *the novel* In Every ugh a Tear; *and the forthcoming children's book* Matzo Ball Moon.

lease write one ore...

All-of-a-Kind Family Downtown
More All-of-a-Kind Family
All-of-a-Kind Family Uptown
Ella of All-of-a-Kind Family

en I was seven I wrote to Sydney ylor, asking her to write another vel. Turn-of-the-century heroines a, Henny, Sarah, Charlotte, and rtie showed me that as a Jewish nale I had not only a history but a literary tradition as well. These were the first books I read where Jewishness was the norm—not a source of angst, but a happy fact of life.

I soon received a reply, explaining that Taylor had died in 1978, thus ending my hopes of a new novel. It was signed, "Affectionately, Ralph Taylor (husband)." It was my first literary correspondence.

Elizabeth Michaelson is a former LILITH intern and a 1996 graduate of Barnard College.

eborah & Letty

as most influenced by my Bat tzvah *haftarah* reading, the story Deborah. It was February 1952; I s not quite 13. I had never countered Deborah in Hebrew hool. I'd only learned about the atriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel d Leah, and Queen Esther, but re was a woman who was in the *nach* in her own right, not because e was the mother or wife of an portant man. Deborah was a ophet, a military commander, and e only woman among the Bible's rteen Judges. I was deeply pressed by the fact that she led r people in their victory over the naanites and then presided over ty years of peace. Thirty-one cenies passed between the reign of borah and the era of Golda Meir. a little Jewish girl growing up in e 1950's, I drew my inspiration m both.

P.S. Earlier in my childhood, I ed *The Adventures of K'tonton* cause I was a tiny kid myself. aybe K'tonton was an uncon-ious metaphor for the power-ssness of being a girl.

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, a founding editor of Ms. magazine, is the author of eight books. Her most recent titles are Getting Over Getting Older *(Little, Brown, 1996) and* Deborah, Golda and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America *(Doubleday, 1992).*

Jewish (but not feminist)

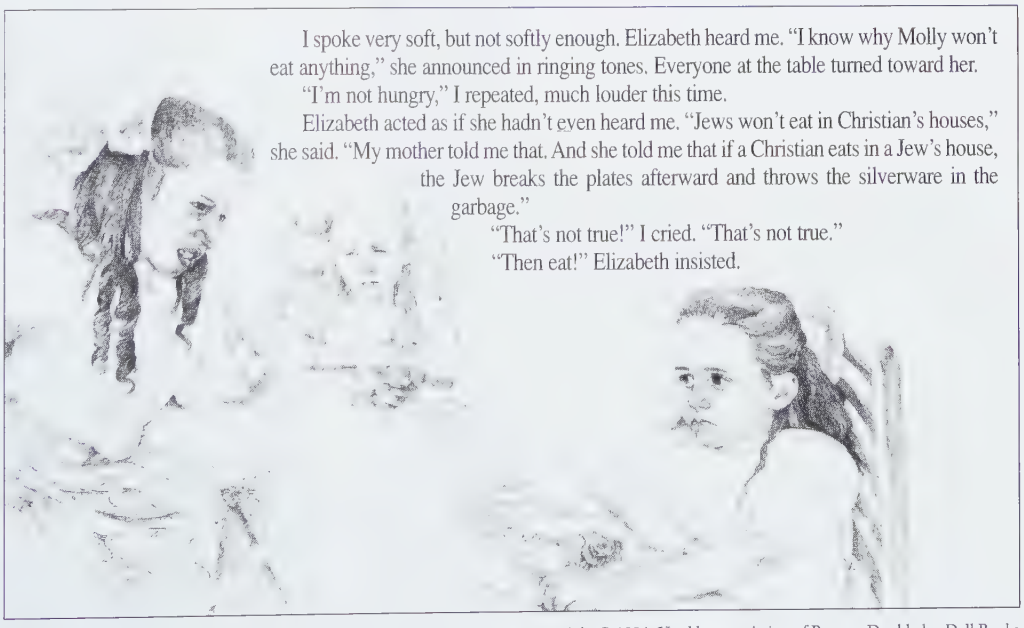
When we set out to re-examine the books which influenced us religiously, we needed to ask, where are the girls and women? Many otherwise good books wound us with their absence of female characters. Although these works were very important to our development as Jews, the Judaism they model is incomplete.

Chaim Potok, for example, gives us novels for teens and adults about traditionally observant men who grapple with complex religious and emotional issues. *The Chosen* and *The Promise* tell of two friends from different religious backgrounds (read: Chassidic and Modern Orthodox) who confront divergent expectations for their futures. *My Name is Asher Lev* is a narrative of a young ultra-Orthodox painter who must reconcile his artistic impulses with his strict religious teachings. These books (often assigned to junior high school students) delineate the conflicts these men feel between their personal aspirations and their religious fervor.

The novel which most influenced my own religious development was Milton Steinberg's *As A Driven Leaf* (Behrman House, 1939, recently reissued), the fictionalized and spiced-up story of the sage and heretic Elisha Ben Abuya, which I read at 14. This book shows Elisha grappling with whether belief in God should motivate his religious observance. While I disagreed with his conclusion—if you don't believe, you shouldn't practice Judaism—I definitely empathized with his inability to see God in his everyday life. But there is no female counterpart to Elisha. Even Bruriah, a potential female Tannaitic role model, is just used as a love interest in the book, following the theory that only men have earth-shattering religious struggles.

These few books are key in defining the challenges which face intellectual religious Jews. Where are the novels about women wrestling with these spiritual crises? Potok's underappreciated *Davita's Harp* has its eponymous female character, but she rarely grapples seriously with the religious issues which so absorb the men in Steinberg's and Potok's books. Although these texts can help us develop into thoughtful Jews, they're little help transforming us into aware Jewish *women.*

—*S.M.*



I spoke very soft, but not softly enough. Elizabeth heard me. "I know why Molly won't eat anything," she announced in ringing tones. Everyone at the table turned toward her.

"I'm not hungry," I repeated, much louder this time.

Elizabeth acted as if she hadn't even heard me. "Jews won't eat in Christian's houses," she said. "My mother told me that. And she told me that if a Christian eats in a Jew's house, the Jew breaks the plates afterward and throws the silverware in the garbage."

"That's not true!" I cried. "That's not true."

"Then eat!" Elizabeth insisted.

From *Make a Wish Molly* by Barbara Cohen, illustration by Jan Naimo Jones Copyright © 1994. Used by permission of Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers. As in Cohen's *The Christmas Revolution* and Kathryn Lasky's *Pageant*, this book shows a young Jewish American girl confronting a predominantly Christian world; Molly won't eat the birthday cake because it's Passover.

Powerful Adolescent Girls

Tragedy, courage, chance, loss and healing, fear and hope—women who survived the Holocaust as youngsters are telling their stories for young readers. *Four Perfect Pebbles* by Lila Perl and Marion Blumenthal Lazan (Greenwillow, 1996); *Parallel Journeys* by Eleanor Ayer (Atheneum, 1995); *Hiding to Survive* edited by Maxine B. Rosenberg (Clarion, 1994); and *The Holocaust Lady* by Ruth Minsky Sender (Macmillan, 1992) are recent examples. These join memoirs such as Aranka Siegal's *Upon the Head of the Goat*, Johanna Reiss's *The Upstairs Room*; Esther Hautzig's *The Endless Steppe* and Judith Kerr's fictionalized autobiography *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, in documenting, with great spirit, this terrible chapter of human history, which we read about in the diary of Anne Frank.

Young readers apprehensive about this subject can approach it with some of their most beloved novelists. In Judy Blume's *Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself* (Bantam, 1977) Sally, in 1947 Florida, is certain that an elderly neighbor is Hitler in disguise and determines to help capture him. In Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic* (Puffin, 1990), a bored Hannah Stern opens the door at her family seder in Brooklyn, circa 1990, to step into a Polish shtetl in 1942 on the eve of a Nazi roundup.

Several authors who are not Jewish also write about the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism, these authors are saying, is not only the problem of Jews, but of those who hate them, and of those who witness that hate. Eve Bunting's picture book *Terrible Things* (Jewish Publication Society, 1989) is an allegorical treatment. Novelist Lois Lowry in *Number the Stars* (Dell, 1989) tells of brave ten-year-old girlfriends in Denmark, one from a righteous gentile family who helps the other and her family escape the Nazis. And Laura Williams tells of a thirteen-year-old Hitler Youth group member who discovers her parents are hiding a Jewish family—*Behind the Bedroom Wall* (Milkweed, 1996).

It's no suprise that a post-Holocaust generation of powerful adolescent Jewish girls are portrayed in fiction set in Israel. Feminism (females are human) and Zionism (Jews are human), are woven seamlessly in Israeli author Gila Almagor's *Under the Domim Tree* (Simon and Schuster, 1995). The female protagonist shares the growing pains of young survivors at a residential school who, having lost the important grownups in their lives, learn to be family to each other. In Nessa Rapoport's *Preparing for Sabbath* (Biblio Press—currently out of print), a religious teenage girl in the maelstrom of the 1970's searches for love and spirituality in the Holy Land. And Lynne Reid Banks brings us, in *Broken Bridge* (William Morrow, 1993), a young Canadian immigrant to Israel, Nili, who explores complicated issues of Israeli-Arab co-existence through her controversial decision to keep a secret.

Historical fiction of an earlier period, not to be missed, includes Miriam Chaiken's *I Should Worry, I Should Care* (Harper, 1979), set in Brooklyn; Karen Hesse's *A Time of Angels* (Hyperion, 1995), set in the 1918 worldwide flu epidemic; and Johanna Hurwitz's *The Rabbi's Girls* (Morrow, 1982) set in the 1920's in the American Midwest. Real life role models spring from biographies such as *Betty Friedan: Fighter for Women's Rights* (Enslow, 1990) by Sondra Henry and Emily Taitz, *Our Golda* (Viking, 1986) by David Adler, and *Molly Picon: A Gift of Laughter* (Jewish Publication Society, 1990) by Lila Perl.

—*Naomi Danis*

"After a while, Adam found comfort with a new companion nam Eve. Adam called his new companion the first woman, because he wa ed to forget Lilith. In the course of time, people forgot Lilith's story a how man and woman were once equal.

But God remembered Lilith, and God named the night after her. Th is why in Hebrew the night is called laila. Some say Lilith stretches t night sky over all God's creation. She spreads a canopy of stars to lig the dark and calls each star by name."

— *from* But God Remembere

From But God Remembered *by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, illustration by Bethanne Andersen, 1995. Reprinted with permission from Jewish Lights Publishing, P.O. Box 237 Woodstock, VT 05091.*

Jewish before I was American

My grandparents, my aunt, uncle, two cousins, my parents and I lived in one Williamsburg, Brooklyn brownstone until the early 30s. I spoke Yiddish before I learned English. I was taught to read and write in Hebrew and in Yiddish. Aunt Dora generously shared her public library books of Yiddish poetry and stories with me. We read daily Yiddish newspapers. "Yiddishkeit" was part of my everyday life, not just reserved for Shabbat and ho days.

I wrote about my early years my first juvenile novel (*Ruth* Meredith Press, 1965). Thinki back to those Williamsburg years realize that I became a Jewish p son before I became an Americ person.

***Norma Simon** is the author of mo than 50 children's books, 13 on Jew holidays or subjects; 2 new ones due in 1997 on Passover and Hannuk (HarperCollins). She moved to Ca Cod 27 years ago.*

At last, Jewish fairy tales

The stories I loved best as a child were fairy tales, mostly from Andr Lang's color fairy books. There was little there from the Jewish traditio And so when I finally discovered Isaac Bashevis Singer's books—li *Zlateh the Goat*—as an adult, and later the folk tale collections Howard Schwartz and Peninnah Schram, I had, at last, Jewish folk a fairy tales to share with my children and grandchild.

***Jane Yolen** is the author of over 200 books for children and young readers, amo them* The Devil's Arithmetic *(Viking/Penguin)*, O Jerusalem *(Scholastic)*, Milk and Honey *(Putnam)*.

oseanne (Yes!) on dn in Utah

owing up Jewish in Utah was a d of Diaspora experience of its n. The Bible is quoted from reg- rly, and is often at the heart of en casual conversation.

I pored over it, looking for exam- es that upset prevailing logic, ch as the passage in Genesis at says, "The sons of God visited emselves upon daughters of man d saw that they were fair."

My Mormon friends got a blank ok when I showed them that one, d a shocked look when I showed en the passage in Psalms where vid says to God, "My skin is ack," because Jesus was a scendant of David, and at the he Mormons considered black in a curse from Cain.

I felt powerful, strange, and otic all at the same time, to think that it was my people's history that formed the basis of the dominant culture's codes of moral, legal and scientific wisdom. Paradoxically, my ancestors and my God were at the center of everything holy to the culture from which my people were excluded.

Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, ***Roseanne*** *knew by the age of three that she was going to be a comic and have her own show. She would entertain family members on Friday evenings when they would all gather in her grandmother's apartment for Sabbath dinner. The reviews she received convinced her she was indeed the Center of the Universe, which she believes to this day. "Roseanne" debuted on ABC in October 1988 and continues to be a top-rated series on television. Roseanne's autobiographies,* Roseanne: My Life As A Woman, *and* My Lives *(published in 1994) also established her as a best-selling author.*

en an alphabet book can model gender equity and equal opportunity. u'll love the mischievous kid in a wheelchair and dad in Birkenstocks ing the laundry in Michelle Edwards' *Alef-Bet*.

Books for the 90s

These books tackle issues which are only now the topics of public discussion with children: senility, body image, divorce. Many of them also portray Judaism infused with feminism, with mothers as rabbis and women taking major roles in the classic biblical tales. An idiosyncratic sampler:

- *Belinda's Bouquet* (Alyson Publications, 1991), by Lesléa Newman, handles the self-image problems girls face from our culture's pervasive pressures to starve themselves. Newman also wrote *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Alyson Publications, 1989), a story of one girl's acceptance of her lesbian parents.
- *Grandma's Soup* (Kar-Ben, 1989), by Nancy Karkowsky, poignantly shows how one girl copes with the slow onset of her beloved grandmother's mental deterioration, while emphasizing the family's continued love.
- *Once I Was a Plum Tree* (Morrow, 1980), by Johanna Hurwitz, is the story of a girl who has to teach herself about her Jewish identity because her family is so assimilated.
- *Ima On the Bima* (Kar-Ben, 1986), by Mindy Avra Portnoy, shows how some mommies are rabbis too (and some rabbis mommies), in a natural and comfortable depiction of a girl and her mother's Jewish rituals. Another of Portnoy's books, *Mommy Never Went To Hebrew School* (Kar-Ben, 1989), tells how one child learns to understand that his mommy didn't grow up Jewish.
- *Who Will Make Kiddush?* (UAHC Press, 1985), by Barbara Pomerantz, shows how a family doesn't need to lose stability after the parents divorce. The family's Judaism and daughter's special relationship with each parent continue.
- *Esther's Story* (Morrow Junior Books, 1996), by Dianne Wolkstein, is one of many new books of feminist midrash, with its 14-year-old Purim heroine going from orphan to queen. Similar is *But God Remembered* (Jewish Lights, 1995), by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso; she creates four new tales about oft-forgotten biblical women, including our own Lilith.

—*S.M.*

Israeli bedtime stories

My new immigrant mother and father didn't read any bedtime stories. But, before putting out the light they recalled strange tales of Eastern Europe, where they were born. I could envision everything: a river frozen in the winter (I hadn't ever seen snow), dark woods (I saw only pines planted by the Jewish National Fund), gray sky, so different from the sharp yellow light that surrounded me.

Strange words were whispered: "shtetl," "Hasidic," "Yiddish." But we already loved in Hebrew and cursed in Hebrew, wearing short khaki pants and our bodies embraced by the unforgiving sun.

How could my parents replace their old lives? How did they find their way to this almost forgotten land? I remember myself cuddled in bed, trying to figure out the mystery. My mother never mentioned the Holocaust, yet I always knew about Auschwitz.

Under the fragile layer of new life was another story, not meant for young ears. An invisible page, burning with great pain and loss. I can see myself covering my head, threatened by this nightmare, letting my imagination run loose. Perhaps my mother and father had secret wings and flew to Israel? When I grew up I made this vision into my book, *Flying Lessons*.

Nava Semel *was born in Israel and has published seven books and three plays. Two of her books are available in English,* Becoming Gershona *(Viking Penguin) and* Flying Lessons *(Simon & Schuster).*

"ELEGANT AND ENLIGHTENING."

—Kirkus Reviews

Esther's Story

Diane Wolkstein

ILLUSTRATED BY ***Juan Wijngaard***

"A lovely retelling of the story of Esther, the young Jewish girl who became a Persian queen and saved her fellow Jews from annihilation. Wijngaard's lavish illustrations and Wolkstein's narration breathe new humanity into this grand and glorious story."

—Publishers Weekly

"Wolkstein fleshes out the Biblical heroine's personality... her qualities of gentleness, loyalty, and compassion, [her] spirit and intelligence. Magnificent full-page gouache illustrations."

—School Library Journal

Ages 7 up 40 pp.
TR $15.00
0-688-12127-6
LE $14.93
0-688-12128-4

MORROW JUNIOR BOOKS
A division of William Morrow & Co., Inc.
1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019

My Grandmother's Pearls

a memoir by
Ellen Rosenberg Portnoy

I was nine when I first found out about the Holocaust and how my grandfather's family perished in the fires of the concentration camps. When I was eleven I discovered I had a cousin living in Israel who was just a month older than I. At nineteen I went to Jerusalem to spend a year at the Hebrew University. It was right before I left that I first heard the story of my grandmother's pearls.

Grandma and I were sitting in the kitchen playing canasta. In her house, playing cards was the best form of recreation and bonding. Grandma taught me many card games over the years. She also taught me how to always win at solitaire. But that's another story. In any case, Grandma often would speak about her life while we played cards. I learned how she came to America by herself when she was sixteen. How she met my grandfather. What it was like to leave her family behind in Poland.

Today, however, Grandma had a new story to tell.

"So, you're really going to spend a year in Israel. You'll visit my brother," Grandma started.

"Yes, I know. I will see Uncle Isaac as much as possible. But remember, I'll be in Jerusalem. He lives in Haifa."

"I haven't seen my brother since 1932. Forty-three years," Grandma said.

I knew to be quiet. It was her remembering time.

"I took your mother and uncle to Poland when they were very young. I saw my family and your grandfather's family. They are all dead you know. Grandpa's parents and brothers and sisters and her children. All dead. You were named after Grandpa's mother, Chava."

"Grandma," I interrupted, "I know about Grandmother Chava."

"Yes," she answered. "But I want to tell you about the pearls. They should have been yours."

"The pearls?" I was surprised. "You never mentioned pearls before."

"Shhh. Let me tell you. When I went to stay with Grandpa's family, I took Stanley and Frances with me. Your Grandmother Chava gave me two pieces of jewelry. The ring you have. The pearls, I wore while I was there.

"One day I went to wash

"One day I went to wash myself. I took off the pearls and left them on the sink."

myself. I took off the pearls and left them on the sink. When I went out, I forgot the pearls. A little while later I went back in. The pearls were gone."

"Gone? Who took them?" I asked.

"Who took them. That *goniff*, that thief. Your grandfather's cousin, Zeisel, was the only one who had been in the bathroom," Grandma said. "He never gave me the pearls. He never said anything. But I know it was him. Your Grandmother is dead and her pearls are gone because he stole them."

"Grandma, are you sure? It's been 43 years!" I was amazed by the anger in her voice.

"He also lives in Israel," Grandma added.

"He does? Where?" I asked. But Grandma was done with her story . . . for then.

Later that evening I asked my mother if she had heard of Zeisel Feuer. I found out that he was the "messenger of death" in our family. He alone had survived to bring the news of the concentration camp murders.

I soon left for Israel and forgot about the pearls. I was busy getting settled, learning Hebrew, meeting relatives, making friends, listening to Richard Nixon resign from the presidency, and living. I was just 19 years old.

Grandma wrote to me every week. Her letters were warm with love. I visited her brother and family many times. I became close friends with my cousin. I loved Israel.

I had been there about five months when a different sort of letter arrived from Grandma.

"Next time you are in Tel Aviv," she wrote, "you will go visit Zeisel Feuer. The *goniff* finally admitted stealing my pearls. He will give you four hundred and twenty five lire ($100) to pay me for the pearls. The money is yours. Buy yourself something special."

I was shocked. Zeisel had really stolen Grandma's pearls and after 43 years wanted to pay her back. What could I do. I wrote to him and said I would be in Tel Aviv in two weeks.

He wrote back. I was to go to a bakery across from the market in Tel Aviv. I was to ask for him. He worked there.

It didn't surprise me that he worked in a bakery. My grandfather was a baker.

I met Zeisel in December. I was looking for a *goniff*. Instead I found an old, bent man, who spoke in a soft, high-pitched voice. He seemed very happy to see me. We walked back to his apartment, where he counted out the money.

> **He told me, "When I saw the pearls on the sink I thought, why not? She lives in America, she can get more pearls."**

"I never was a religious man," he told me. "When I saw the pearls on the sink, I thought, why not? She lives in America, she can get more pearls. So I took them. But then everyone died. My wife, my children, your grandfather's family. They did terrible things to us. And I thought maybe, if I hadn't stolen the pearls, my children might have lived. So now I am a religious man. I go to services every day. I must return the pearls. So here is the money. Now I can rest."

I took the money, but I didn't say thank you. It didn't seem right. I told him about the family in America. About my brother and sister and cousins. Then I had to go.

"Visit me when you are in Tel Aviv?" He asked. "Come to the bakery and ask for me. I'll give you a glass tea and some cake."

"I'll come," I said. And I did. I visited him several times. And he always gave me something to eat and something to drink.

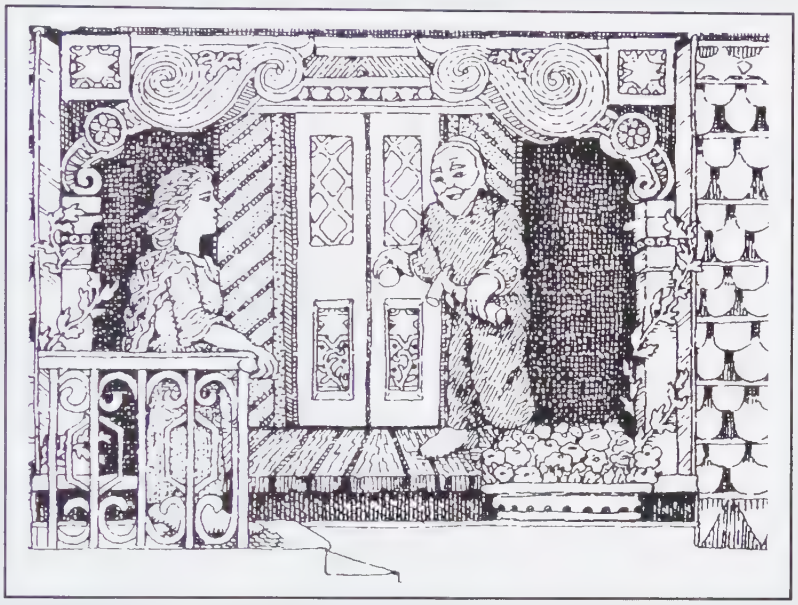
Now, 17 years later, my grandmother's pearls haunt me. I can't remember what I did with that $100. What did I buy? If my grandmother were alive I could ask her. I'm sure I wrote to her and told her what I bought. But I can't remember. I can't remember what I did with my grandmother's pearls. ■

Ellen Rosenberg Portnoy *teaches high school journalism at the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy in Overland Park, Kansas. She says that both of her grandmothers—Thelma "Tova" Szenk Amsterdam and Esther Goldman Rosenberg—were major influences in her life.*

On a cold winter night, not long past Chanukah, a master told her disciples this parable.

The Parable of the Carpenter and His Daughter

"It is a tree of life to those who hold it fast." Proverbs 3:18



Bonnie Gordon-Lucas

by Jill Hammer

Many years ago, a widowed carpenter built a house for himself, and he lived there with his young and gifted daughter. The house was magnificently made, with elegant staircases and fine polished floors. The carpenter had taught his daughter woodworking too. She learned to cut planks, join and carve. Some skills she learned through her father's instruction, and others she learned as she simply watched him, whittling by candlelight.

This carpenter was famous for his work, for he could make simple neccessities look like sumptuous luxuries. In his free time, he studied books of woodworking, architecture, landscaping, gardening. His joy in his craft showed in everything that he did. His daughter kept house, cooking and sweeping his workshop.

As she grew older, the carpenter's daughter said to herself: "My father has given out of room for his vast library. I will surprise him by building new rooms on to our fine house so that my dear father will have space for his many books. Maybe I will even build a room just for myself," she further pondered, "and pursue my own studies there."

And so the carpenter's daughter secretly began planing her clever addition which would sit on the hill at the back of the house and be connected to the original building by means of a passageway lined with windows. She was proud that her design fitted almost seamlessly with the home her father had built so many years before, yet it also had elements which were entirely hers. She started building as soon as her father left on his yearly journey to buy exotic woods in a faraway city. And she intended to finish the entire project before her father returned home. It would be a surprise gift for him.

Alas, nothing went as quickly as planned, and on the evening her father was due to return to the village, she had finished everything *except* the passageway that would connect her creation to the original house.

She worked frantically, sawing and nailing and cheerfully imagining her father taking his books out of unsightly boxes and placing them in the new cabinets she had built with her own hands.

When the carpenter arrived back at his home, he heard the familiar sounds of a carpenter at work. Looking out the back window of his home, he saw to his surprise a small building perched on the hill right in back of his house, on his own land!

Furious, he ran out the back door, intent upon finding the person who had violated his property. He saw the unfinished passageway, so well made that it looked to him like the grand entrance of a wealthy household was being built. He did not notice how small the building was and how closely it matched the structure of his own house. Instead of admiring the beautiful engravings on the new doorframes and the glossy shine of the new walls, he noticed instead bent and broken nails, sawdust, and paint chips lying about on his back porch. Finding his own tools on the ground, he

realized that the work could only have been done by his daughter. "What has happened here?" he asked, enraged.

And he imagined that—rather than building a new section for his own house—his daughter had built a second house, one to rival his own, and that her intent, now that she was grown up, was to supplant him and undermine his prosperity. Her ungratefulness took his breath away. "How stupid I was to bring her gifts!" he thought. And when he saw the tools lying so near his front door, he became convinced in his rage that she intended, once her own house was finished, to demolish his own.

At that moment, the carpenter's daughter appeared in a newly-built doorframe. "Papa!" she cried. "I have so much to tell you! Welcome home!"

"Traitorous child!" he shouted. "Did you think you could destroy all I have worked for in so short a time? What a fool I was to teach you my trade! I disown you! Get off myland!"

And with that, the carpenter rushed into the new building with his hammer, intending to smash everything. He broke windows and tore up floorboards. Clenching his teeth, he thought of all the opportunities he had missed to be stern with his daughter and thus prevent her from being greedy and deceitful. He grew angrier, and swung his hammer harder.

But when the carpenter got further into the house, he saw the scores of old boxes containing his treasured books, sitting beside the cabinets his daughter had prepared to hold them, and he saw how the morning light came through the windows, warming the room, making a pleasant spot to sit and read, and he realized suddenly that his daughter had not betrayed him.

He emerged from the house he had almost destroyed, and saw his daughter trudging down the road, away from the village. "Wait," he called to her. "Please forgive me for what I did and said! Perhaps we can join these houses after all!"

When the young woman heard the pleading sound of her father's voice, she almost wanted to ignore it, but instead she turned and walked back in the direction of the house. In silence, she and her father repaired the windows and fixed the floorboards and fastened the shingles to the roof. Finally, they attached the new building to the carpenter's house.

When they were done, the daughter said: "Papa, I love you. How could you think that I would do anything to destroy your hard work? I only wanted to create something new, to show you that I also am a good carpenter."

"You became a stranger in my eyes," replied her father. "It frightened me that you had built something without me. I was so happy with things as they were."

"Everything changes," said the daughter. "I learned that from you." She shifted her feet uncomfortably. "I need time to sort all of this out on my own."

Her father sadly agreed. He hoped that someday they would find a way to live in harmony again. And so the daughter traveled and learned, building houses and furniture to earn a living while she discovered the world. Everywhere she went, people praised her work, for her own creative power, and her father's wise teaching, showed in everything that she did. She came to understand her father's hopes and fears in a new light, and she came to know herself as intimately as she knew him, and to listen to her own voice as well as his. After a long

"Traitorous child! Did you think you could destroy all I have worked for?"

time, she realized how much she missed her father and the village in which she had grown up. She packed her wagon, harnessed her horse, and set off for home.

When she came to the finely built house in the little village, she was surprised to find that not all was as she expected. Her building with its windowed passageway was still there, but the walls were a different color, and other rooms had been added, lending even more beauty and complexity to the whole. Even the flowers in the garden were new. Her father met her at the door.

"Papa," she stammered, "how different it all looks."

Her father smiled. "Everything changes," he said. "Welcome home."

"But, rebbe, what does the story mean?" the disciples clamored.

"What is your interpretation?" the master asked them.

One of the scholars busily cleared his throat. "It clearly parallels Hasidic stories of the 20th century, in which father and daughter represent male and female aspects of the Divine. As in those stories, the *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence, is sent into exile from the heavenly realm, yet this parable breaks the traditional pattern. At first the *Shekhinah* is exiled by her fathe but later she willingly exiles herself. Th reminds us that exile can be forced on u but exile can also be chosen, for it teach wisdom as well as pain."

Another scholar exclaimed: "Th daughter shouldn't have been exiled in th first place. She wanted to wield the know edge which she had gained from her fathe Yet after giving him so much, she had leave her home in order to keep somethin for herself! This story reiterates th prophets' warning: unequal power bree injustice, and injustice breeds narrowne and division."

"But the father comes to understand h mistake," one student pointed out, "and th daughter returns to her home."

"And what do we learn from this?" th rebbe prodded.

"That love causes exiles to return," th student answered. "And that our image God as a parent is both beautiful an flawed, for parents inspire devotion b also rebellion."

"Master," one young student whispere "perhaps the carpenter and his daughter d not represent the Divine at all. Perhaps the represent us. They show us how the gener tions threaten and enrich each other. Th father is angry at the daughter for changin the way things are, because he fears she wi replace him. The daughter is angry at th father for misunderstanding her intention because she fears he will reject her. Yet h receives from her the gift of innovation, an she receives from him the gift of memor They will build their future together." Th student fell silent. Looking down, she saw as if for the first time the carved wood of th table before her.

The rebbe nodded in approval. Then sh lifted her hands to the warmth of the fi where an old copper kettle shone brightl for it was a very cold night. "My de ones," she said, "this is my interpretation

"The carpenter's house represents th Torah. The father represents tradition. Th daughter represents the will to grow an change. And the change itself? This repr sents our constant struggle to understan God's will. This is what Solomon meant h saying: 'It is a tree of life—to those wh hold it fast.' The tree grows and grows, an we must grasp the farthest of its blossoms while keeping the roots in sight."

***Jill Hammer** is a published poet and stor writer, and a rabbinical student at the Jewi Theological Seminary.*

From the Conversation at the Breakfast Table

a poem by Carol Davis
for Anne

Holiness is a force, and like the others can be resisted. —*Annie Dillard*

It's time to talk about creation.
When the *rebbetzin* explains how
this table, for example,
is recreated at every moment,
I submit to every word.
(It is hard enough to believe in love.)
While just now one of the legs
begins to twitch as if remembering
life before: the constant stream
of summer picnickers, even the
carving of names, painful though it was
when the boy took the knife and dug in.
We can all forgive at one time or another.
What prevents us from seeing angels
dance among the succulent leaves of
watercress or swinging from the dense
head of roadside yarrow?
If you do not witness the actual death
all that is left is the body.
Little to hold on to even as we perform
extra *mitzvahs* to elevate the soul:
chanting psalms out loud,
dropping extra coins for charity.
There is always one more Hassidic tale.
How a man couldn't read the prayerbook,
didn't know the melody and went alone
to the forest and cried out.
This single note reached heaven.
What prevents that man from being a woman?

***Carol Davis**, of Los Angeles, is teaching at the Jewish University of Petersburg in Russia. She is the author of a book of poetry,* Letters From Prague, *published by Paperback Press.*

I'm going to wear mine the gym!
I'm going to wear mine to sleep in!
I'm going to wear mine to my next reading group!
LILITH
LILITH
"creates a voice where there was silence;
it saves what is good in the patriarchy while transforming what is destructive;
it offers scholarship for argument and women's personal voices for enlightenment;
and delight, good writing and humor."
—Gloria Steinem

LILITH

the non-profit independent Jewish feminist magazine has been around now for 20 years, and you know what?

We need your help more than ever!

You can make a contribution by buying and wearing a LILITH T- shirt and sharing your enthusiasm with other potential readers.

When you wear the shirt, you might also be surprised and delighted to discover other avid readers in your midst.

Until now we've had only two of these shirts—extra large, 100% cotton—rotated among LILITH staffers for special occasions—b because of popular demand we will now make more! For $50 you can wear your own cover shirt, featuring full color miniature repr ductions of covers from 21 different issues of the magazine on the front, and words of praise for LILITH from Gloria Steinem on th back. To help you help us we will ship along with your shirt a batch of LILITH subscription flyers to distribute to inquiring admire when you wear your shirt.

❑ **Yes. Send me __shirt(s) for $50 each (additional contributions welcome). $36 of each shirt order is tax deductible.**

Total $ _____ ❑ **Check enclosed** ❑ **Visa** ❑ **MasterCard** ❑ **Amex**

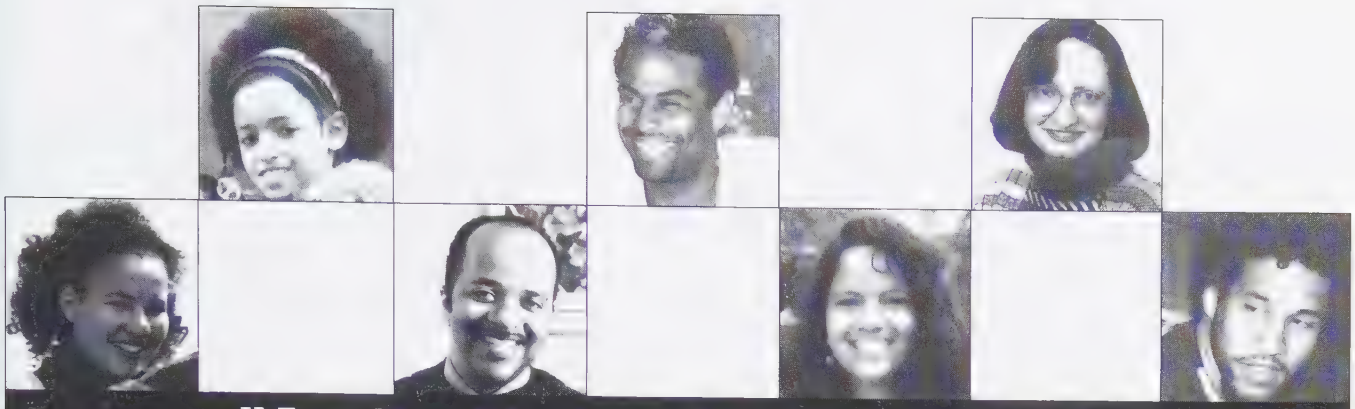
❑ **Please charge my credit card#** _____ **expiration** _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Please allow up to 8 weeks to receive your shirt. Please send your order to : LILITH, 250 W. 57 St. #2432, New York, NY 1010
Or call 212-757-0818, fax 212-757-5705 or e-mail lilithmag@aol.com to place your order.



"Are You Black or Are You Jewish?"

The New Identity Challenge

by Sarah Blustain

TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK, on the streets of San Francisco, complete strangers walk up to Lisa Feldstein and ask, "What are you?"

She's not Indian, South American, Puerto Rican or—her favorite suggestion—French. The child of a black Christian woman and a white Jewish man from an Orthodox family, she usually gives them a straight answer. But for Lisa, and the estimated thousands of other biracial children of black-Jewish origin, the answers are not so simple.

A large segment of this biracial population was born into the liberalism of the 1960s, whose adherents hoped to achieve, by activism and example, an America in which race and religion would invite no bias. They have not succeeded. Indeed, in the subsequent three decades, the ideal has shifted more than once away from color-blindness toward racial and ethnic identification—stranding these black-Jewish offspring in hostile territory.

From all over the country, we found individuals willing, even eager, to describe their lifelong struggles to define themselves. Often, and movingly, they report childhoods spent in confusion, and adulthoods spent negotiating the polarized alliances of their birth.

But at this moment in America, they also find themselves with another choice. It is a choice evolving into a national grassroots movement of "multiracial pride," an attempt to assert all parts of the self as equally valid. They have organized nationally to add a "multiracial" category to the year 2,000 census—their option in the last census was "other"—and political and cultural groups have begun operating both online and face to face in cities throughout the country. A retreat for multiracial Jewish families is being planned for November at the Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, Connecticut; and, in the company of black Jews by descent (Ethiopian), adoption, or conversion, they formed last year the Alliance of Black Jews. Organizer Robin Washington, the son of a Jewish woman and a black man, says of his own identification: "[I'm] one hundred percent of both."

These individuals defy the dictates of history, politics and simple appearance, and their stories illuminate the fracturing biases of a society that is not ready for them. But even as they demand recognition, the question arises: Does the multiracial movement add yet another allegiance to the list demanded by their social and political communities; or, in an increasingly multiracial country, does "their very existence," as one observer suggested, "change society"?

"Tannish Skin and a Gigantic Jewish Nose"

The legacy of the black-Jewish child is heavy: claimed by Judaism for her Jewish mother, sometimes rejected by Jews for the color of her skin, labeled as black by the age-old "one drop rule," embodying in herself the uneasy and sometimes violent social interface between two groups that have both admired and disdained each other.

In the late 1990s, these children, now in their twenties and thirties, are coming into adult consciousness of race in a climate that is in many ways much colder toward the black-Jewish pairing than when they were conceived. (It is similarly complex for those who adopt, marry, or convert across traditional color lines.) Indeed, the debris from the explosion of ethnic pride is still settling. Whether it's about rioting in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, clashes over Louis Farrakhan's claims of

extraordinary Jewish participation in the slave trade, or the self-segregated lunch tables at colleges across the country, the basic question asked of these racially and religiously mixed people is: Are you black or are you Jewish? The message, as one woman put it, is, "either you're with us or against us."

People interviewed from all regions of the United States spoke of the ways they respond to this question, and of identities shaped by the complex constructions of adult politics and emotions. Lisa Feldstein recalls family lore about her father's two brothers, one of whom sat *shiva* for him when he married a black woman, her mother. "The one that decided he was dead," she says in Lise Funderberg's recent book *Black, White, Other*, "was upset that my mother was black; the other brother was more upset that she wasn't Jewish." Variants on her story are common, as are tales of rocks thrown and doors slammed by blacks in the faces of multiracial people whose allegiances they considered split. The definitions—and the rejections—come from all sides, echoes not only of culture and history, but of a deep confusion over race that had its first voice in their homes.

"A lot of times parents of mixed kids try to raise their kids with a non-racial ethnic identity," says Jan Weisman, who studies the Amerasian children of Thai women and American soldiers stationed in Thailand. "They try to pass on this idealistic idea to the kids, which does not prepare them for life. . . . Parents of mixed kids are generally quite out of touch with what the experiences of the children really are." (A number of those we spoke with, like Weisman, have carried their interest in questions of identity and race into their professional careers.)

Weisman herself was raised by her black mother (her white, Jewish father quickly out of the picture) in the predominantly black south side of Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s. She says she greatly resembles her Jewish father—"tannish skin and a gigantic Jewish nose"—a clear liability in that racially-charged environment. She recalls being shot at, spit at and stoned by students on the way to school because "white people in general were seen as the enemy." Rejecting her daughter's experience, however, and shunning the terminology of the time, mulatto, her mother insisted she was black.

But if her mother wanted her to be black in the street, she also had other dreams for her daughter. Because of the Jewish reputation for being brainy, Weisman's mother prohibited her from checking the "religion" boxes on school forms—"she was holding out for me to be Jewish. I was a good student in schoo and she was always talking about how I had got it from my fa ther," she recalls. "I was a Negro child who happened to b half Jewish. She never quite explained how it worked."

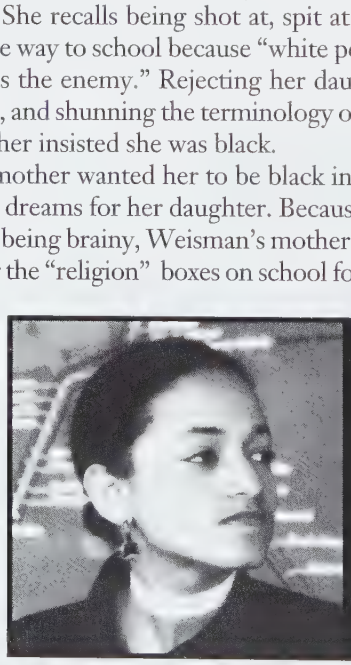
Melissa Patrick Smith was born in the late 1960s, the daugh ter of a Jewish mother and a black father. She grew up in an oth erwise white home after her mother married a white Jewish ma and raised a family. "I wore my hair in an Afro up until I wa old enough to take care of it myself," she says. "That was mom' rule, because she didn't know how to take care of it herself."

As the only multiracial person in her family, Smith recall an atmosphere of denial around the question of race—a silenc similar to that which surrounds religion in some interfaith households, or which shrouds Holocaust experiences in some survivor families.

The 29-year-old speaks easily now, but recalls a more diffi cult time. "For a period I was very angry at my parents becaus I felt they didn't provide me with any real tools to deal with a lot of the shit that's out there, the racism. . . . One explanation that I had from my mother—it kind of makes me chuckle—she told me to tell kids, 'Sticks and stones will break my bones.' O she would say, 'When people stare, they're just curious.' . . . We never talked about the fact that I was multiracial. . . . It was something that clearly made my parents uncomfortable."

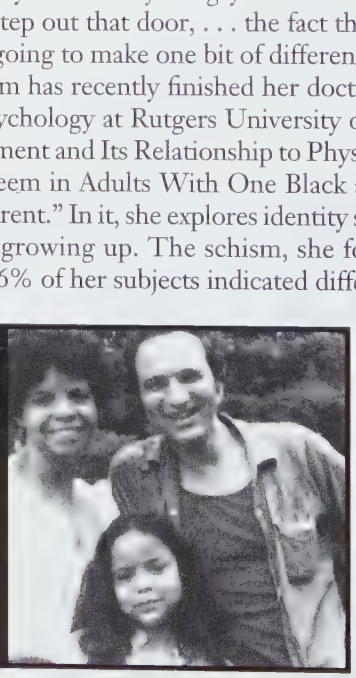
Even when parents were very clear in their guidance, how ever, their black-Jewish offspring still report confusion, for their family structure was not reflected in the outside world. "Growing up, I was given very clear messages by my black mother that regardless as to how I identified myself, society and people in general would treat me as a black female," says 26-year-old Kim Buxenbaum of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, the daughter of a Jewish man and a black woman. "She'd say, 'You can consider yourself anything you want in here, but the minute you step out that door, . . . the fact that your father is white is not going to make one bit of difference."

Buxenbaum has recently finished her doctoral dissertation in clinical psychology at Rutgers University on "Racial Identity Development and Its Relationship to Physical Appearance and Self-Esteem in Adults With One Black and One White Biological Parent." In it, she explores identity splits such as she experienced growing up. The schism, she found, was quite common—36% of her subjects indicated different public and



Lisa Feldstein

"The minute you step out that door, the fact that your father is white is not going to make one bit of difference."



Kim Buxenbaum with her parents

private identities. Family attitudes, she found, were most influential in determining a child's racial and ethnic identity. Social factors pulled in second.

Tension around the issue of identity for black-Jewish offspring seems highest on college campuses, where clashes over racial and ethnic politics commonly erupt—in the classroom, the lunchroom or the dormitory. As a freshman on the Rhode Island University campus, where she was a student, Smith told members of the black student organization she was becoming involved in that her mother was Jewish. "It was strange," she muses about the effects of this admission. "I'm a friendly person, and I'm nice, and I've always gotten along with people, [but] when I joined the African-American student group, I had the most difficult time building relationships. . . . [The leaders of the group] really sent the message to me that they didn't want me around."

Smith says that even when she organized a chapter of the national Society Organized Against Racism on campus, she was joined by some groups of color but was told by the black student group "that they prefer not to work on things with white people." Suddenly, the one-drop rule was reversed: one drop of "white blood" excluded her from black society.

Elinor Tatum was on the overwhelmingly white St. Lawrence University campus only a day or two when a black student cornered her at lunch and starting testing the boundaries of her black identity. She recalls his asking, "So you don't have a lot of black friends here, do you? How are you paying for college? With a scholarship? Student loans?"

"I had a choice of being black on campus and associating with 60 people, or being myself and associating with everybody," says Tatum, whose mother is white and Jewish and whose father, Wilbert Tatum, publishes the New York black advocacy newspaper The Amsterdam News.

For the black-Jewish college student, these types of race politics present what may be an artificial—but nonetheless rigid—boundary between being black and "not black." All things, in this choice, are not equal. This is the 1990s, after all, when the objective observer can see that "Jewish" doesn't have a spectacular draw. Marriage between Jews, a Council of Jewish Federations study told us in 1990, is down to 50%. (Even announcing an intention to marry a Jew draws charges—from Jews and non-Jews alike—of both parochialism and elitism.) And CJF researcher Jeffrey Sheckner reports that the statistic everybody really wants to know—and that he doesn't—is how many black Jews there are in this country.

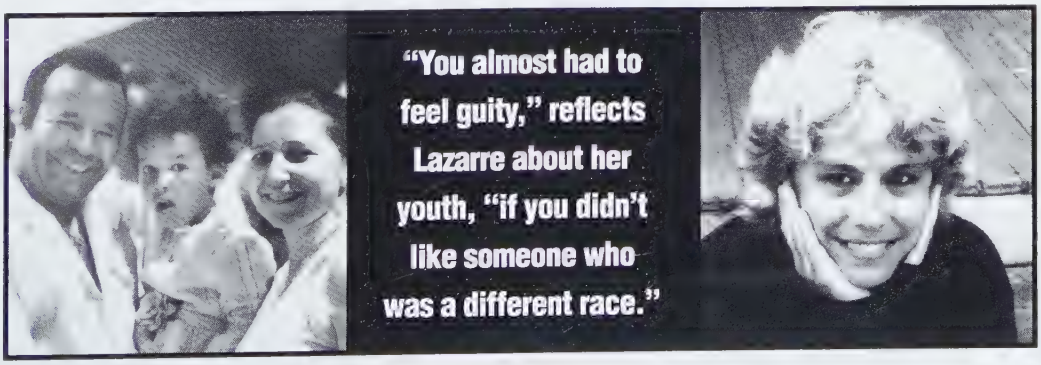
The pressures in the black community, meanwhile, are intensifying. Recent graduates testify that hyphenating a black identity is not often encouraged: a conservative black man is approached on the street by fellow black students and called "white boy;" a black woman who straightens her hair reports being shunned.

The Halcyon 1960s: When *Loving* Prevailed

The irony is that it was such rigid definitions of race that the parents of these black-Jewish offspring were confronting in the 1960s. It was a moment of innocent ideals, as some recall it, when according to the liberal line the difficulties of their children's interracial, interreligious parentage were supposed to evaporate. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, black-white births were at a high of 2.5% of all births in 1968, when the statistics began to be compiled, compared with just over 1% in 1988. Even some parents, recalling decisions made three decades ago, will admit to a political shading.

"Many still see a racially mixed marriage as a gesture of defiance against law and society," proclaimed a New York Times editorial in June 1967. The occasion, marking its 30th anniversary next spring: the Supreme Court ruling, in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*, that states could no longer outlaw miscegenation. "As legal barriers fall and society adopts a more tolerant attitude," the Times continued, "young people of all races will see marriage as an expression of confidence in the future, not revolt against the past. Love will then be truly color blind."

Jane Lazarre, a Jewish woman and author of the early feminist tract *The Mother Knot*, married her black husband Douglas in the late 1960s and raised two sons with him. She recalls being taught explicitly by her New York Communist parents to be color-blind. In her newly published book, *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness*, she writes of a time "when the Communist Party was trying to eradicate racism from its ranks, when you could be brought up on charges (before a party tribunal) for ordering a 'black and white' soda. 'We are all the

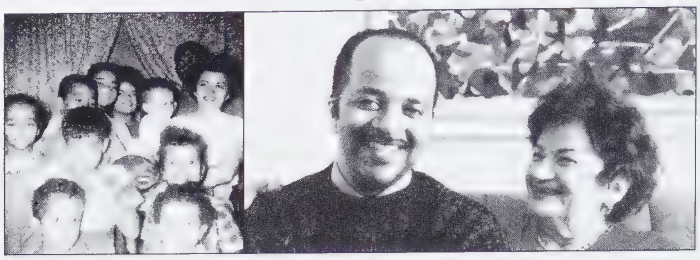


"You almost had to feel guilty," reflects Lazarre about her youth, "if you didn't like someone who was a different race."

Elinor Tatum with her parents

Jane Lazarre

Jewish Mothers, Black Children



Ruth McBride with her 13 children, and with her son James

IN A RECENT FLOOD OF BOOKS about multiracial identity, Jewish mothers struggle to become part of the world of color in which their children live. Writes Jane Lazarre about the first of two sons she had with her black husband, "In the innocent, exultant power of the first day of a first and wanted pregnancy, I realized that I—my body and self—was no longer exactly white." From that moment on, she, and others, spent years in the effort, as Maureen Reddy called it, of *Crossing the Color Line.*

Dreadlocked Mom

Twenty-four-year-old Kimani Fowlin, a dancer and choreographer, graduated college in 1990. She keeps a framed photograph from that day on her desk at work. Fowlin wears a black robe, accented by a strip of Kente cloth. Father, on one side, beams. Mother and daughter, both bronze-skinned, wear their hair in cascades of dreadlocks. Says Fowlin:

"My father is Jamaican and my mother is Jewish. They met in the sixties. . . . Ever since I was very young, Mom has been pro-black. It's a weird situation; she hates being white. She hasn't become black—she can't. Her skin color seems kind of dark, but it's because she uses Sudden Tan. . . . She does not like the white race.

So basically, she was the black influence. My dad was the more white one in the family. Very interesting. But she's a very angry person and just hates the injustices of what Whites have done to Blacks constantly and still do. . . . She finds beauty in the black race in every aspect, like physically: the big nose, the big lips. . . . I wish I had videotapes so I could show you how we communicate and how within a public situation—say we're with a group of black people—Mom will take on this black persona. She fools people all the time. To me, she doesn't look black, but she's got the attitude."

—From *Black, White, Other,* by Lise Funderburg (William Morrow, 1994)

The Only Place to Stay

Ruth McBride, born Ruchel Dwajra Zylska in 1921, grew up in a family of Orthodox Jewish, Polish immigrants in rural Virginia, where they ran a grocery store. Her mother, partly paralyzed, was a loyal housewife. Her father "would call [her] by any name and make fun of her disability," McBride recalls. "His marriage was a business deal for him. He only wanted money." Considered "low" among Jews "because we dealt with shvartses," taunted in school as a "Christ killer," and sexually abused by her father, Ruth fled for New York, where she married a black man and lived out her days a Baptist. "My family," she told her son James in an interview, "mourned me when I married your father." She continued:

"If there was one thing Tateh [Ruth's father] didn't like more than gentiles, it was black folks. And if there was one thing he didn't like more than black folks in general, it was black men in particular. So it stands to reason that the first thing I fell in love with in life was a black man. . . . None of the boys in school would even bother with me. So after a while I had me my own friend, [who was black], and he didn't care that I wore secondhand clothes or was Jewish. He never judged me. That's the first thing I like about him, in fact that's what I like about black folks all my life: They never judged me. . . . They just said, 'Come as you are.' . . .

"There was no turning back after my mother died. I stayed on the black side because that was the only place I could stay. . . . With whites it was no question. You weren't accepted to be with a black man and that was that. They'd say forget it. Are you crazy? A nigger and you? No way. They called you white trash. That's what they called me."

—From *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother,* by James McBride (Riverhead Books, 1996)

The "Shame" of Belonging

Raised by her New York Jewish communist parents to be color-blind, Jane Lazarre became a teacher of black literature, the wife of a black man and the mother of two biracial sons. In her new book she writes:

"I am the distant cousin of Holocaust victims, the child of an immigrant Jew, the daughter-in-law of a woman who remembers her grandmother telling stories of her childhood in slavery, the mother of two young Black men who are the fifth free-born generation of people enslaved for fourteen generations.

"All this is my history and I come from all of this. When I walk through the white world, I am a white woman . . . who is not looked at with suspicion or fear or even hatred when I walk down a beautiful ocean beach in New England or northern California where my children's brown bodies instantly stand out differently than does mine, their skins beautiful and rich brown against the water and sand. I am an ordinary American woman protected by this whiteness, . . . and I am weighted down with the transforming shame this knowledge brings.

—From *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness: Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons,* by Jane Lazarre (Duke University Press, 1996)

same, there are no differences between people,' was the weird non sequitur in response to any childish notice of color differences among strangers or friends. We were taught to sing, 'You can get good milk from a brown-skinned cow, the color of the skin doesn't matter anyhow.'"

"You almost had to feel guilty," she reflects in an interview, "if you didn't like someone who was a different race."

Lazarre may be an extreme example, but there are many other offspring of liberal parents who had hoped to pass over into a colorless world.

Lisa Feldstein, whose San Francisco home is a far cry from the Spanish Harlem apartment in New York where she grew up, speaks of her father's involvement in the Civil Rights movement, of a childhood spent going to marches, singing "We Shall Overcome" at home. She says her parents made no distinction between the Holocaust and slavery or any other tragedy of human history. "These were all part of greater wrongs that had to be righted," she says. "It was all one big piece."

Among those for whom this idealism was particularly strong were Jewish women. Jews comprised up to a half of those going south for 1964's Freedom Summer and other major civil rights efforts, and women comprised about one third, writes Debra Shultz in her recently completed history Ph.D. dissertation on Jewish women's participation in the Civil Rights movement in the South. "It seems reasonable to assume," she continues, "that many of those anonymous white women volunteers were Jewish. . . . [C]learly their primary impetus was to be part of a democratic movement to fight racial injustice."

Anecdotal evidence and government statistics on black-white offspring indicate that interracial coupling and marriage in that era were primarily between black men and white women. "'Intensely focused on white racism, utterly unaware of racism against Jews . . . '" Shultz quotes one of her sources, who went South to work for civil rights, as saying, "'I felt only shame at the label—Jew girl from Brooklyn—and at the stereotype—hypocrite, liberal in public but won't bring him home to meet the family. I determined not to be like the others; not to be like myself.'"

Reflecting, with more than two decades of hindsight, on her decision to live in a multiracial family, Jane Lazarre admits she didn't anticipate the racial tensions that would so quickly re-emerge. "Racially it was a time of great hope," she says. "It was a vision that everybody shared, that we would be able to move past race . . . a vision that I had of raising happy children, both in terms of gender and race, as free as possible to be who they were."

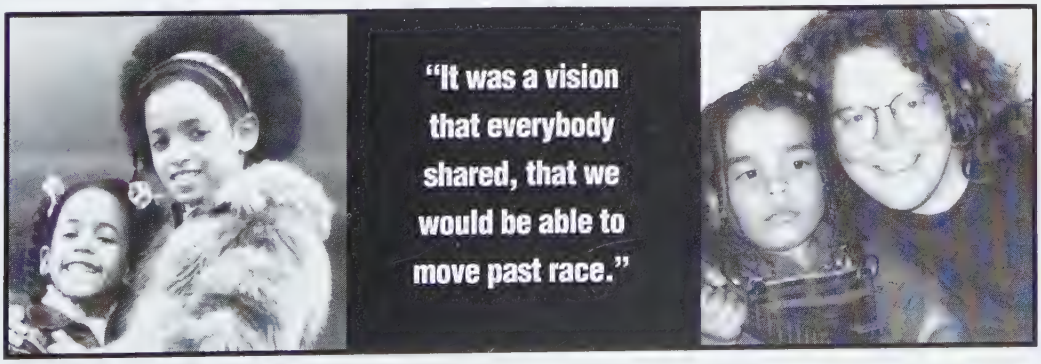
Who these children were to become, however, was much more complicated than the liberal rhetoric of the day. It was also more complicated than the words, like "mulatto" and "mixed race," that came to describe them. As primary caretakers, the mothers of these black-Jewish children quickly learned that their idealism didn't easily apply to real life: in day-to-day activities, politics broke down and became personal. Often, they had to compromise the ideal of color-blindness in order to locate themselves in an environment in which their children would be accepted—which often ended up being in a black community.

Such compromises were particularly demanded by a racially charged climate, which erupted quickly out of the decade's earlier universalism. By the time the Supreme Court ruled in the Loving case, the impulse toward racial and ethnic segregation had already resurfaced. A strongly separatist black pride movement and Israel's 1967 victory in the Six Day War—a spur to Jewish pride—not only created a rift in the black-Jewish alliance of the Civil Rights movement, but began to pit the twin aspects of these interracial, interreligious children against each other.

"In the seven years I'd been with Roi," recalled writer and teacher Hettie Jones (née Cohen) about her Civil-Rights era marriage to black militant and playwright Amiri Baraka (né LeRoi Jones) in How I Became Hettie Jones, "I'd watched the loosening of what would one day be called 'black rage.' I knew it could turn on me but that was part of the risk and I hadn't imagined how much. Now some people were beginning to say that hypocritical Roi talked black but married white. Others, more directly, said he was laying with the Devil."

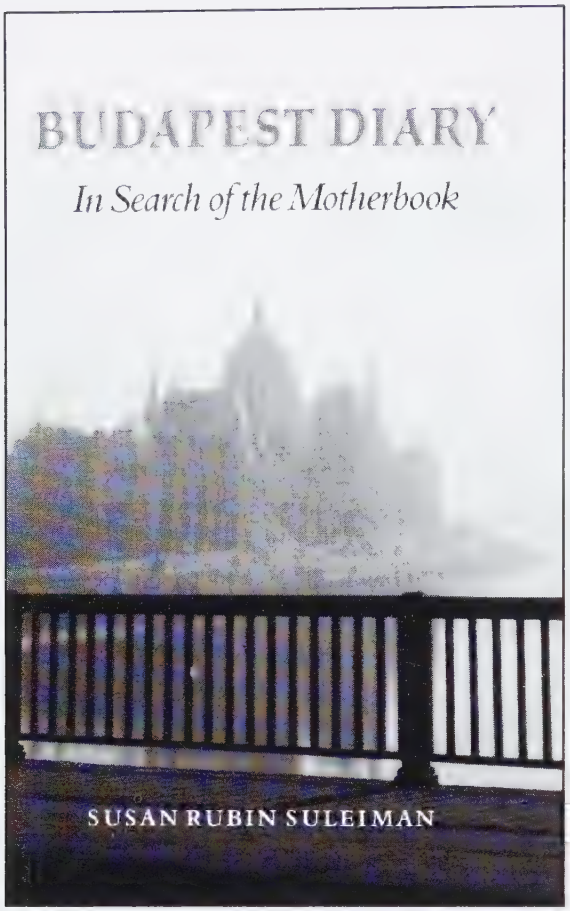
Indeed, Jones' surprise (and the current media's sentimentalism) notwithstanding, the black-Jewish alliance of the 1960s demanded a certain denial about the level of hostility that had existed in earlier decades. For even as blacks and Jews were thrown together, categorically, in the margins of American society, they were separated by an economic and social differentiation that bred hostility.

In the opening pages of his 1988 book Broken Alliance, Jonathan Kaufman cites a 1948 article in Commentary maga-



a Feldstein and her
ger sister Michelle

Anne Ludden with her son Cullain



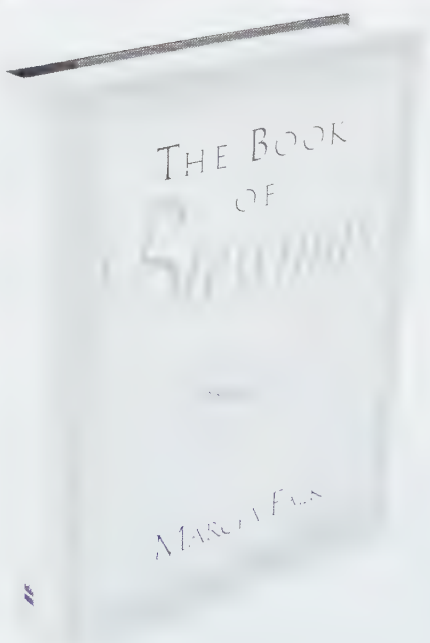
"ENGAGING"

Searching for her Hungarian Jewish roots, Susan Suleiman returns to her birthplace after a 40 year absence.
$25 cloth

University of Nebraska Press
publishers of Bison Books
Lincoln NE • 800-755-1105
www.unl.edu/UP/home.htm

"N

THE MOST IMPORTANT JEWISH BOOK OF THE YEAR ...



NOW IN BOOKSTORES EVERYWHERE

THE BOOK OF BLESSINGS
Marcia Falk

A landmark prayer book by one of Judaism's foremost translators and poets—a groundbreaking translation of the blessings, poems, meditations, and rituals, in English and Hebrew, for weekdays, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival.

HarperSanFrancisco
An Imprint of HarperCollins*Publishers*

zine by James Baldwin stating, "T Negro identifies himself almost wh with the Jew. The more devout Ne considers that he is a Jew, in bondage a hard taskmaster and waiting fo Moses to lead him out of Egypt."

Proof, in the nostalgic vein, of a h toric alliance. But just two paragrap later, in passages Kaufman omits, Ba win clarifies: "This same identificati . . . serves, in contemporary actuality, implement an involved and specific b terness." Jews in Harlem, he tells us, v trade with blacks, but take advantage them, and therefore are hated. But t bitterness is deeper. "When the Neg hates the Jew as a Jew he does so par because the nation does and in much t same painful fashion that he hates hi self. . . . Just as a society must hav scapegoat, so hatred must have a sy bol," he concludes. "Georgia has t Negro and Harlem has the Jew."

"There's My Box. There's Me"

The perfect synthesis of the universal vision of the mid-1960s and the ethn pride impulses that followed, multirac identification has been growing on grassroots level for about a decade, fin ing its voice as "multiracial pride These individuals are refusing to choo sides—in the face of social pressures between their two parental legaci Triply marginalized—as black, as Je ish, and as multiracial—they are findi a way to a collective belonging.

"Multiracial pride is no less valid th any other pride," proclaims Susan Gr ham, the founder of Project Race Georgia-based organization aimed adding the "multiracial" category to t national census. This drive, and simi ones on the state level, to amend sta dardized academic tests and oth forms, currently holds the multirac pride movement's political spotlight.

For Graham, a white Jewish wom who has two children—now 8 and 12 with her black husband, the issue is bo personal and political. In 1990 she beg to realize the problems her son cou face throughout his life when she r ceived the census form and saw the was no category for him. A call to t census bureau finally yielded the answ he's the race of his mother, white.

chool, however, when the boy's eacher was asked to classify him for chool records, she marked him as the ace of his father, who happened to ick the boy up that day.

"My son was white on the census, lack at school and multiracial at ome," she says. Her son himself went n to testify before a House of Repre-entatives hearing on this issue, by the ime her daughter enrolled at school our years later, Georgia had legislated multiracial slot. When her daughter aw the box, Graham reports, the girl aid, "There's my box. There's me."

With almost perfect regularity, re-pondents recall the trauma of having o check just one of these little boxes.

"Across the board, people tend to want to be identified as both black and ewish," says Aliyah Baruchin, the daughter of a Jewish man and a non-ewish Greek woman. Baruchin herself s dating a man from West Africa and s writing a book entitled *Blood Knots: Black-Jewish Intermarriage and the Pol-itics of Love*. "People want to be one undred percent black and one hun-dred percent Jewish."

"You Might Not Like This"

In practice, however, these concepts are easier to proclaim than to live. It is with considerable conscious effort that some do manage to create a multiracial environment for themselves. Jan Weis-man, who has settled in an academic community in Seattle, says she has no desire to return to her black roots on Chicago's South Side. There, she says, she has to "become black." Instead, she's "developed a strong desire to live n an environment [where] I can be to-tally open about being mixed. You def-nitely have to put on an act when you're not with mixed people. . . . Here I can be myself."

Those who succeed work hard at it. They network on the Internet, on cam-pus, through friends. But it does not happen easily or by passive involve-ment. Nor has the Jewish establish-ment—if our interviewees' experiences are any indication—responded warm-y to their call. Anne Ludden, herself born in the late 1960s to a Jewish mother and white Christian father, is

Blue Hill Recordings presents

Sleep My Child

A Collection of Jewish Lullabies in Yiddish, Hebrew, Ladino and English

"A marvelous collection... just extraordinary and beautiful."
– Ron Della Chiesa, WGBH-FM

"This collection of beautiful lullabies will calm parent as well as child."
– Hadassah Magazine

This beautiful 70-minute collection of gentle, inspiring lullabies is performed by recording artists Judy Frankel, Rosalie Gerut, Robbie Solomon, Norman Janis, Lilly Kinas and members of the Klezmer Conservatory Band. These outstanding performers present favorites such as: "Rozhinkes Mit Mandlen," "Yankele," "Oyfn Pritetshik," "Erev Ba," "Durme hermoza donzella," and more with full translations and transliterations included. A wonderful gift for children and parents as well.

To order call 1-800-827-2400.

MRS. WEINSTEIN'S TOFFEE

"Even OK toffee is pretty good, but Mrs. Weinstein's Toffee is very, *very* good."
Charles Perry, Food Writer, L.A. Times

1-1/2 lb. tin Assorted flavors - $29.50
1 lb. tin Single flavor - $22.00
1/2 lb. tin Single flavor - $14.75
Above prices plus shipping and handling

When the last bite is gone, you will live on in abject longing for another

1 (800) 682-0978

Shanah Tovah from

KAR-BEN BOOKS

Storybooks and Cassettes
Shabbat and Holiday Family Services
Folktales and Bible Stories
Toddler Board Books
Activity and Cookbooks

Call us for our free catalog: 1-800-4-KARBEN
6800 Tildenwood Lane · Rockville, MD 20852

A Growing Jewish Library for Young Children

raising the three-year-old son she conceived with a black man to be a traditionally observant Jew. Though the boy always wears a hat or *kippah* and *tzitzit* and even at his tender years can manage the laws of *kashrut* on his own, the family attends a Reform synagogue.

"Reconstructionist and Reform shuls are much more embracing of us as Jews, and tend not to look at the racial background," she says. "I'd love to be able to raise my son in an Orthodox setting, but many Orthodox individuals wouldn't be so comfortable with that."

Feldstein, who isn't gay, nonetheless belongs to a predominantly gay and lesbian synagogue in the San Francisco area; she says that there, questions of racial identity don't come up. "The only tensions I've experienced there have had to do with sexual identity," she says.

And Graham, raised as a Conservative Jew herself, says she simply was not comfortable with "the typical, Conservative suburban synagogues. Where we were comfortable—you might not like this—was with the Jewish humanists."

You might not like this. The question, almost glossed over, persists: why is she apologizing? For marrying a black man? For her children's uncommon heritage? She and her children, like all multiracial children, are among those for whom the "right" to belong—as blacks, as Jews, as Americans—is anything but assumed. Instead of inheriting the richness of belonging to two cultures, she and her family have found themselves entirely welcome at none.

Many more are those who declare their allegiance to both sides of their identities but indicate, by the clues of their day-to-day affiliations—a style of dress, a manner of speaking, neighborhood of choice, religious practice—a more partisan reality.

Speaking from the newsroom of The Amsterdam News, where she is associate publisher and chief operating officer, the 25-year-old Elinor Tatum proudly announces the balance of black and Jewish culture in her home growing up, about going to synagogue on the High Holidays and to church when she visits her black relatives down South, about her black, Christian father leading the Passover seder. She recalls the generations of slaves, memorialized at her father's family reunions, and the stories of her Jewish aunt, who was liberated from Terezin. She considers herself a "bridge" and a "peacemaker" and proclaims, "I'm not going to let anyone make me—I guess you could put it in terms of citizenship—renounce who I am."

In the political nitty-gritty of black-Jewish relations, however, some of her proclamations, on Louis Farrakhan, for instance, display a slant she seems not to admit. Of his Million Man March, staged last year in Washington, she says, "I'll tell you one thing. It made people stand up and look at him for a moment and say, 'This man has power.' He can be seen as a positive force at times and for other people he is a destructive force. I have

"I was a Negro child who just happened to be half Jewish," says Weisman. "My mother never quite explained how it worked."

Jan Weisman in a school photograph.

READ
JEWISH BOOK WORLD
for the most comprehensive coverage of the latest in Jewish publishing.

Feature articles
Book Reviews
Children's Book Section
New Media Column
Ordering Information

3 issues annually
$20.00 per year • $55.00 for 3 years

JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL
15 E. 26th Street • New York, NY 10010
(212) 532-4949 ext. 297

דרישה
DRISHA
INSTITUTE

Cultivating Women's Minds
Assuring Women's Contributions

Advanced Jewish Studies for Women
Intensive training in the study and analysis of traditional Jewish texts

Courses in Talmud, Bible, Jewish Law, Philosophy and Prayer at all levels.

New Yesodot program for beginners!

Day & Evening classes
Full & Part-Time Semesters, Mini-Sessions and Community Lectures (men welcome)
Summer Sessions include special High School program.

Register Early!

Winter Week of Learning
Monday, Dec. 23 - Thursday, Dec. 26
And for those who can't come to Drisha, let Drisha come to you:
The Drisha Tape Project

Drisha Institute for Jewish Education
131 West 86th Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10024
ph. (212) 595-0307 fax: (212) 595-0679
email drisha@panix.com

een him as both. . . . A lot of what he ays is very well documented, in terms of Jews, and a lot of things he quotes are written by Jews."

This same type of split appears in the words of James McBride, whose new book *The Color of Water* tells the story of his Jewish mother's life raising him and his 12 siblings in a black New York community. He declares his strong black identity with the subtitle *A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*, and he's got little that's kind to say in its pages about his mother's native Jewish community.

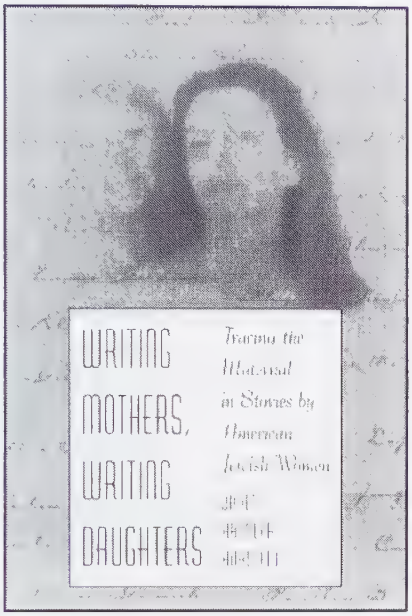
Nonetheless he has absorbed the language of the new movement toward multiracialism, and expresses perhaps its most utopian vision. Having traced in an interview his feeling of being "caught between white and black," and his desire, at one point in his life, to be "all black," he concludes, surprisingly: "I see it as an advantage. I really do. When you're raised by a white woman who is Jewish, one of the things you learn very quickly is that neither whites nor Jews nor blacks have a monopoly on perfection. . . . You learn to use that to your advantage. . . . To let go of the anger."

The language of multiracialism is new, its meanings sometimes vague. At times it sounds like rhetoric; at others, like the nascent efforts of a community learning to speak. For these individuals are fighting social forces that would reject their claims of dual citizenship. As Baruchin has found, even on the most superficial level of appearance the multiracial aspect is not always observed. The face of the mulitracial individual, she says, is just beginning to be recognizable. ■

Sarah Blustain, recipient of the Newswomen's Club of New York's Front Page Award and a Contributing Editor at the national weekly newspaper the Forward, joins LILITH's staff as Associate Editor with this issue.

Page 13 photos, left to right: (top row) Lisa Feldstein, Adam Lazarre, Jan Weisman; (bottom row) Elinor Tatum, James McBride, Kim Buxenbaum, Khary Lazarre.

JEWISH MOTHERS DAUGHTERS WRITERS WOMEN



WRITING MOTHERS, WRITING DAUGHTERS
Tracing the Maternal in Stories by American Jewish Women
JANET HANDLER BURSTEIN

"A fascinating, innovative, and gracefully written study." — Joyce Antler, coeditor of *The Challenge of Feminist Biography*

A refreshing look at the Jewish mother through her own and her daughter's eyes: this is what Janet Burstein offers as she takes readers on a journey through popular twentieth-century texts, examining mother-daughter portrayals by Edna Ferber, Vivian Gornick, Grace Paley, Cynthia Ozick, Rosellen Brown, and dozens of others.

What emerges from this fascinating examination is an emotional, but in no way stereotypical, complex of all-too-human experiences revealed through the pens of talented American Jewish women writers.

Cloth, $34.95; Paper, $12.95

ACTIVE VOICES
Women in Jewish Culture
MAURIE SACKS

"There is really good reading here, ranging from riveting to fascinating to solid and interesting." — Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, YIVO Institute for Jewish Studies, New York.

Unique in its multidisciplinary approach to Jewish women's lives and perceptions through time and space, this collection considers women in Europe, Israel, and North America, including the teller of tales and the singer of songs, the Jewish woman at prayer and as ritual organizer, as well as the modern woman struggling to find her place in a post-modern Jewish world.

Cloth, $34.95; Paper, $12.95

SALOME OF THE TENEMENTS
ANZIA YEZIERSKA
Introduction by Gay Wilentz

"*Salome of the Tenements* is shot through with genius." — *New York Tribune*

"It seems to me that there can be no more doubt of the genius of Anzia Yezierska." — *The New York Herald*

Salome of the Tenements shocked many critics and writers when first published in 1923, but its author was immediately hailed as a major new talent. A love story of a working-class Salome and her "high-born" John the Baptist, the novel is based on the real-life story of Jewish immigrant Rose Pastor's fairytale romance with the millionaire socialist Graham Stokes. It also reflects Yezierska's own aborted romance with the famous educator John Dewey.

The Radical Novel Reconsidered series

Paper, $14.95

800/545-4703

Illinois

http://www.uiuc.edu/providers/uipress

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS • 1325 South Oak Street • Champaign, IL 61820

Media Watch: Just When You Thought It Wa

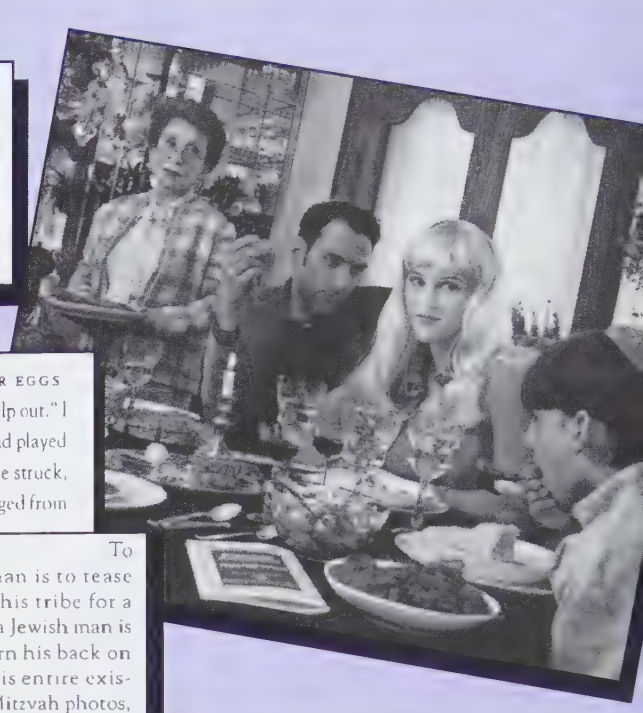
The Goy Next Door

Confessions of an American Shiksa

By Meghan Daum

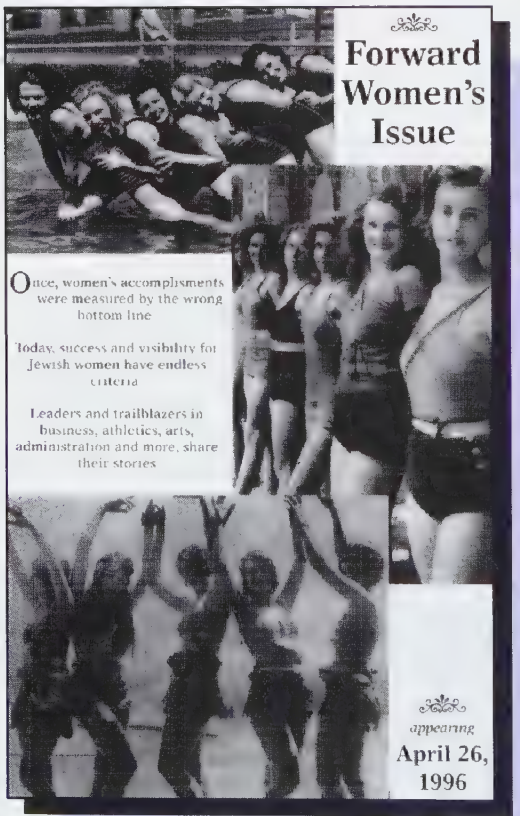
GQ

July, 1996

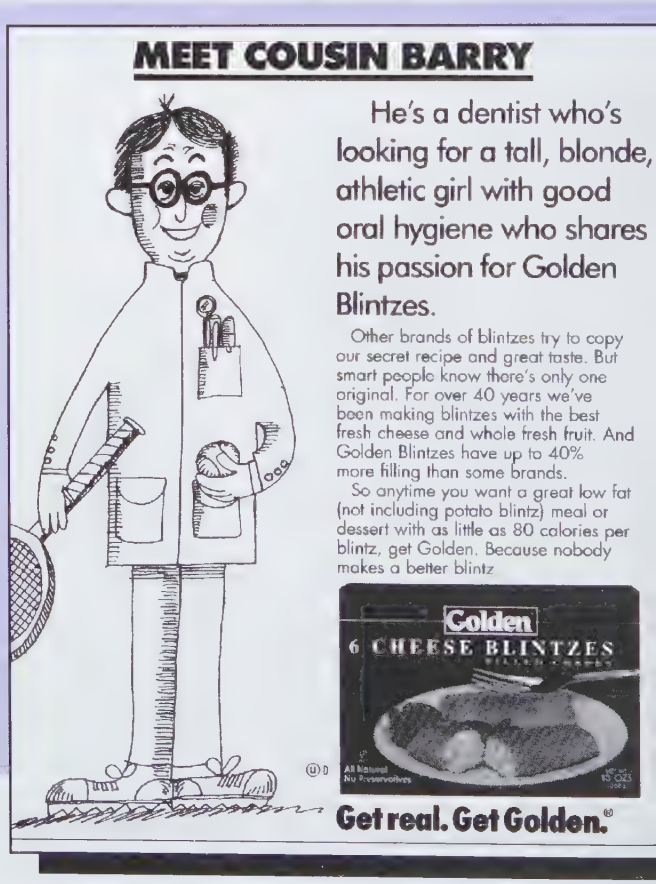


I WAS BORN JUST ANOTHER BLONDE. I HUNTED FOR EASTER EGGS I decorated trees and ate ham. I was raised to smile, to cooperate, to "help out." I made pot holders and read books on cake decorating. I jumped rope and played hopscotch under a perpetually weary sunshine. But when adolescence struck, something strange happened. Instead of becoming a woman, I emerged from childhood as something even better a shiksa

To date a Jewish man is to tease him away from his tribe for a while. To marry a Jewish man is to get him to turn his back on the essence of his entire existence—his Bar Mitzvah photos, his SAT scores, his mother

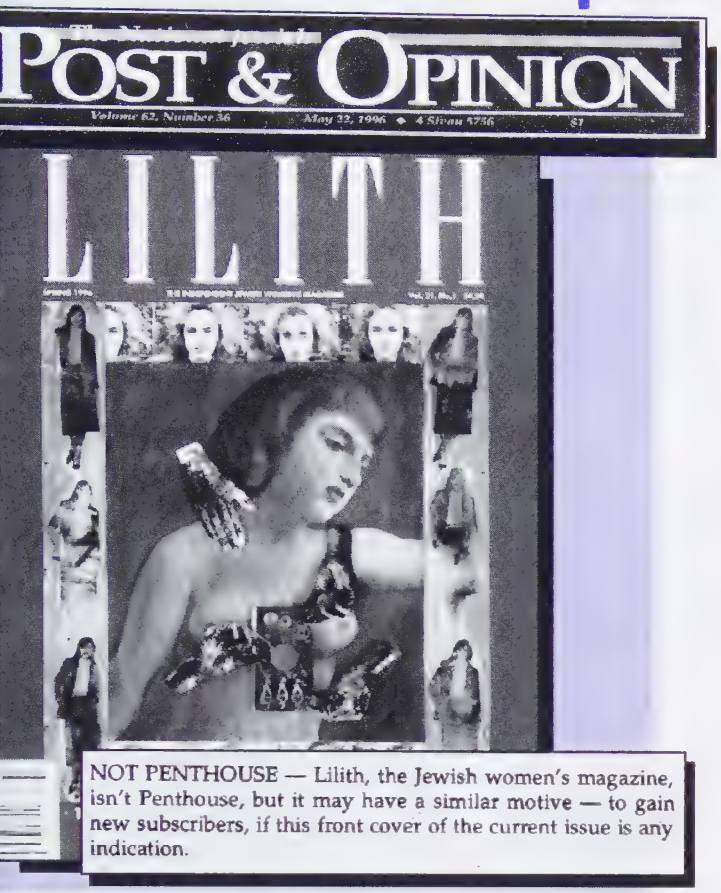

Forward
Women's Issue
Once, women's accomplishments were measured by the wrong bottom line
Today, success and visibility for Jewish women have endless criteria
Leaders and trailblazers in business, athletics, arts, administration and more, share their stories
appearing
April 26, 1996

The Forward, Spring 1996

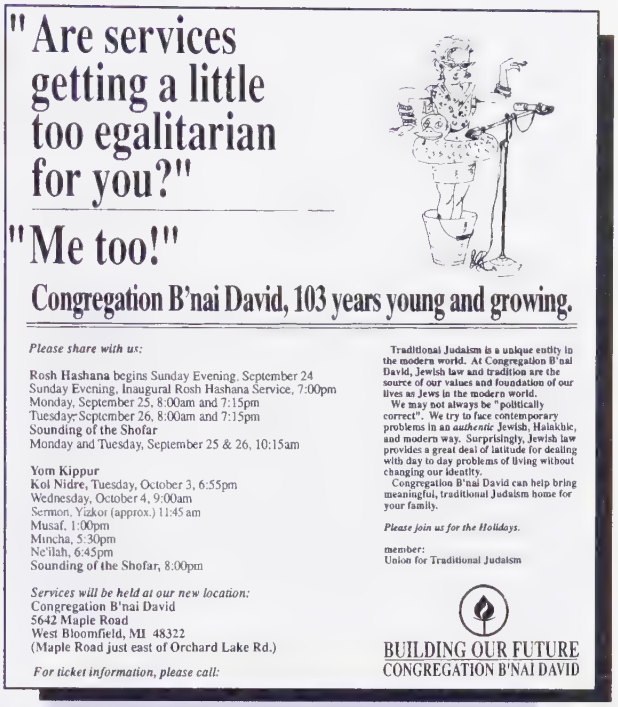

MEET COUSIN BARRY
He's a dentist who's looking for a tall, blonde, athletic girl with good oral hygiene who shares his passion for Golden Blintzes.
Other brands of blintzes try to copy our secret recipe and great taste. But smart people know there's only one original. For over 40 years we've been making blintzes with the best fresh cheese and whole fresh fruit. And Golden Blintzes have up to 40% more filling than some brands.
So anytime you want a great low fat (not including potato blintz) meal or dessert with as little as 80 calories per blintz, get Golden. Because nobody makes a better blintz.
Golden
6 CHEESE BLINTZES
Get real. Get Golden.®

Washington Jewish Week, June 15, 1996

afe to Read the Paper...



NOT PENTHOUSE — Lilith, the Jewish women's magazine, isn't Penthouse, but it may have a similar motive — to gain new subscribers, if this front cover of the current issue is any indication.


"Are services getting a little too egalitarian for you?"
"Me too!"
Congregation B'nai David, 103 years young and growing.
Please share with us:
Rosh Hashana begins Sunday Evening, September 24
Sunday Evening, Inaugural Rosh Hashana Service, 7:00pm
Monday, September 25, 8:00am and 7:15pm
Tuesday, September 26, 8:00am and 7:15pm
Sounding of the Shofar
Monday and Tuesday, September 25 & 26, 10:15am
Yom Kippur
Kol Nidre, Tuesday, October 3, 6:55pm
Wednesday, October 4, 9:00am
Sermon, Yizkor (approx.) 11:45 am
Musaf, 1:00pm
Mincha, 5:30pm
Ne'ilah, 6:45pm
Sounding of the Shofar, 8:00pm
Services will be held at our new location:
Congregation B'nai David
5642 Maple Road
West Bloomfield, MI 48322
(Maple Road just east of Orchard Lake Rd.)
For ticket information, please call:
Traditional Judaism is a unique entity in the modern world. At Congregation B'nai David, Jewish law and tradition are the source of our values and foundation of our lives as Jews in the modern world.
We may not always be "politically correct". We try to face contemporary problems in an authentic Jewish, Halakhic, and modern way. Surprisingly, Jewish law provides a great deal of latitude for dealing with day to day problems of living without changing our identity.
Congregation B'nai David can help bring meaningful, traditional Judaism home for your family.
Please join us for the Holidays.
member:
Union for Traditional Judaism
BUILDING OUR FUTURE
CONGREGATION B'NAI DAVID

Detroit Jewish News, September 1, 1995
Submitted by
Rabbi Robert P. Tabak, Philadelelphia

This Can't Pass Without Comment

From time to time in history's ignoble files, Jews have been accused of well-poisoning and bringing on the plague; such slanders have occupied their own special category of anti-Semitic ideation. Jews have also been sexualized by anti-Semites; the Jew as "other" (whether male or female) has intermittently been portrayed through the ages as a seductively dangerous dark stranger. Now the two categories—poisoner and sexual predator—have been combined! What you may find more startling than this bizarrely concocted tale of aphrodisiac-laced chewing gum itself is the unanalyzed fashion in which the news is reported, with no mention of how this loony accusation fits into a millenia-old pattern of accusing Jews of undermining the purity of another culture's maidens. Read on, and laugh or groan. Or both.

Mansura Journal | *THE NEW YORK TIMES* **INTERNATIONAL** *WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 1996*

Of College Girls Betrayed and Vile Chewing Gum

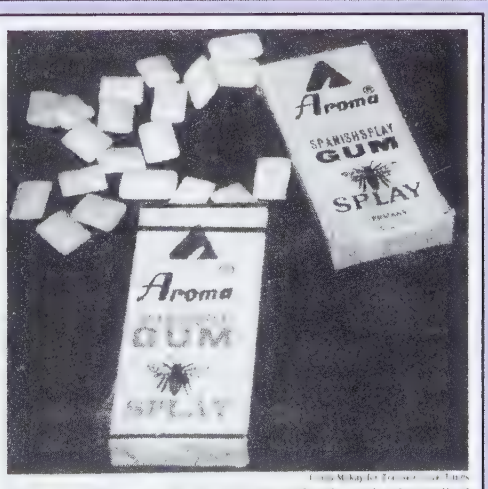
Exactly what happened at Mansura University is still elusive, even after weeks of reports in anti-Israeli newspapers and furious allegations by a member of Parliament, Fathy Mansour, who has accused Israel of "a huge scheme to ravage the young population of Egypt."

A laboratory analysis by Egypt's Ministry of Health found nothing in the brands of so-called Israeli gum, said to have been traced to smugglers in Gaza, that could stimulate sexual arousal, the Health Minister, Ismail Sallam, said in a news conference last week. And an investigation by the vice squad in al-Daqahlya province found nothing to back up reports that women driven to passion by the gum had carried out sexual attacks on their male classmates.

"We are no longer safe," said Sayada Abdul Moneim, a 20-year-old high-school graduate who, like her friend Miss Mosalem, wore her hair veiled in a gesture of Islamic modesty. "Women should be more prudent. I now use a brand of gum that is made in Egypt. It is not very good quality, but at least it is safe."

A 21-year-old woman who asked to be identified only as Amira and who would be interviewed only over the telephone said she had learned firsthand of the gum's powers.

"I lived the experience deeply and truly," she said, explaining that she had accepted a ride and then a piece of gum from two male classmates and then had begun to lose control.



The talk in Mansura is that doctored gum has been the downfall of certain young women. Packets of the gum lay on a vice squad desktop

JEWISH WOMEN'S LITERARY ANNUAL, VOL. 1, NO. 1
edited by Henny Wenkart

Jewish Women's Resource Center, 1995. $7.50 per annual, $15 for 3 year subscription. Order from the National Council of Jewish Women, New York Center, 9 East 69th St.,New York, NY 10021

From poetry about the prophetess Miriam to accounts of their romances with Israeli soldiers, Jewish women are now connecting their Jewish and female sides in poetry and prose as never before. Henny Wenkart's anthology is a wonderful compilation of some of this marvelous writing. With authors such as Lesléa Newman and LILITH's poetry editor Alicia Ostriker, this book covers a wide variety of personal subjects, from women in the Bible to their own grandmothers. This collection provides outstanding examples of some of the best Jewish women's writing today.

—Sara N.S. Meirowitz

©1996 Tsirl Waletsky for The Jewish Women's Literary Annual

HOW WE FOUND AMERICA: READING GENDER THROUGH EASTERN EUROPEAN IMMIGRANT NARRATIVES
by Magdalena Zaborowska

University of North Carolina Press, $18.95

"... a woman has no country, as she is already an outsider—the other—to the whole world."

Quoting Virginia Woolf, author Magdalena Zaborowska explores the broad question of exile identity, and womanhood, as it is voiced by six Eastern European immigrant writers. In *How We Found America*, she first looks at her own experience as a Polish immigrant, and how it colors her identity as a woman and as a writer. "From my 'resident alien' vantage point in the United States, I see myself as suspended between Poland, where I was born but which I now know only through memories, and the United States, where I live but which I cannot enter fully as a foreigner." Zaborowska layers feminist theory, politics, and history, to understand the literary struggles for self-definition of these authors, who are "telling stories . . . because no simple answer is possible."

Examining the alienation of these writers, Zaborowska compares the experiences of both Jews and non-Jews whose works span the twentieth century. Mary Antin, Elizabeth Stern, Anzia Yezeirska, and Eva Hoffman are related and contrasted with Maria Kuncewicz and Vladimir Nabokov. The first three writers particularly express the issues of their era. Jewish immigrant women whose families fled the pogroms in Eastern Europe at the turn of the century, their work was controversial at a time of mass immigration and widespread xenophobia. Popular culture portrayed the immigrant woman as over-emotional , hypersexual, and ignorant; even feminists like Charlotte Perkins Gilman denigrated the "immigrant whores" who threatened American "purity." Because of their uneasy status in America, the literature of these women was also received ambiguously Critics and readers have labeled their work "immigrant narrative," ethnographic documents, autobiography, fiction—even propaganda.

Through writing, Antin, Stern, and Yezierska attempt to mediate their tainted "Old World" past with a future as the "American Women," which they try to become. All three writers deal with their Jewish background seen at once as embarrassing, valuable, restrictive, and essential to their identity. Their ideal of America, the "Promised Land" of freedom and opportunity, is betrayed by their experience in the crowded poverty and constant struggle of the tenements. As immigrants fighting anti-Semitism, they also have to redefine what it means to be a woman. Zaborowska elaborates: "On the way to establishing a precarious identity in a new country, the immigrant woman's gendered self is constantly threatened, because in order to succeed in her ambitions, she has to defy the traditional roles prescribed for females by her own ethnic group and dare to modify the ones defined by the host culture she longs to enter." Even by writing, these women defy the traditional roles for women in both New and Old Worlds.

Like Mary Antin, Elizabeth Stern sees her Jewish immigrant past as a "chain" which she cannot break, no matter how much she tries to escape into an acculturated "American womanhood." Anzia Yezierska, the best-known of the three authors, also deals with a painful dual identity. Yezierska's heroines burn with the desire to "make from myself a person." Impassioned and agonized Jewish women, who long for education, interact with cool handsome WASP scholars who represent rescue from their squalid poverty and ignorance. Despite her use of Cinderella storylines, Yezierska "consciously 'smuggled' alternative subtexts into her tales beneath their commercial happy endings; in doing so, she challenged the dominant narrative and its reductionist depiction of immigrant women's experience."

While writers like Antin, Stern and Yezierska conform in many ways to the expectations of publishers and readers of the time, they also subvert these expectations Their work challenges conflicting gender roles for women, explores the multiple identities and loyalties of the immigrant, and illuminates a struggle to survive in a world that left little room for nostalgia.

—Sarah Wallis

The Reformer's Apprentice
a novel of old San Francisco
by Harriet Rochlin, author of *Pioneer Jews*

"A story heartwarming in its Yiddishisms and re-creations of Jewish life before the turn of the century, but whose heroine resists the old-world ways in order to achieve a more liberal and humanistic view of life." —Merrill Joan Gerber

224 pages, $19.95 hardcover
At your bookstore or from Fithian Press (800) 662-8351

LETTERS

HOW TO REACH LILITH MAGAZINE:
LILITH WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, ARTICLES, FICTION, POETRY AND MEMOIRS. INCLUDE ONE-SENTENCE BIO, ADDRESS AND PHONE. FOR GUIDELINES OR RETURN OF MS. PLEASE ENCLOSE SASE: LILITH, 250 WEST 57TH STREET, #2432, NEW YORK, NY 10107. (212) 757-0818, FAX (212) 757-5705. E-MAIL ADDRESS: LILITHMAG@AOL.COM

WISH MALE SPERM R YOUR CHOICE

esponse to the Spring 1996 cle by Terese Loeb euzer, "Jewish Single thers—by Choice," I won- if you might send me the dress of the newsletter gle Mothers by Choice, ntioned on page 31. I am ping to find Jewish women o are looking for Jewish nors and where Jewish men ght contribute. If you have information, I would also appreciative.

Caleb Kriesberg
Bethesda, MD

itor: Singles Mothers by oice, 200 E. 84th St., New k, NY 10028; (212) 988-0993. don't know if they arrange h matches, but they provide ny other supports.

ONSIDERING NGLE MOTHERHOOD

a Jewish single woman nsidering having a child, it s encouraging to hear of cessful experiences. Unfortunately there was no one I uld directly relate to. As a year old recently out of college, looking to establish self, and considering motherhood, I am very interested in er women who may be periencing the same issues. hough I related to women the article, I also felt set rt from them due to my age my "plans" for a two-parent family, just not in the tradional order. A partner will me along in my life, a child n bring about, and am cong it. Did you, in your erviews, speak to any men in a similar situation? ould love to somehow get touch with them to discuss endless issues that I face when pondering this decision. I'm so glad you are bringing this topic into the light. Thank you.

Amy Bran
Santa Cruz, CA

WHAT ABOUT FATHERS?

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the article titled "Jewish Single Mothers—by Choice." Like many articles published in LILITH, it reflected an attitude of acceptance for any lifestyle choice, even if it conflicts on some level with the tenets of Judaism and/or feminism. What troubled me about the article was that it did not reflect the pain the single mothers must have felt when their lovers refused to accept the responsibility of parenthood.

The author explained that the father of Esther Delheim's baby "wasn't interested in commitment," and that when he found out Dellheim was pregnant "he said good-bye and good luck." I am not suggesting that society should condemn this man for his unwillingness to become a father, but I do think it's wrong to create the impression that it's perfectly acceptable for a man to forego his duties as a parent because the child's mother is content to raise her baby alone.

It's encouraging that women today are asserting their independence in every aspect of life, but it's important to recognize that men also have rights and responsibilities when it comes to child-rearing. Society should not give equal credence to selfish, irresponsible choices, such as abandoning a pregnant partner, as it gives mature responsible decisions, like providing a stable, loving home for a child.

Melissa Payne
Brooklyn, NY

GIRLS' ROSH CHODESH GROUPS

I'm 11 years old and I live in Morristown, N.J. On Rosh Chodesh Adar, I started a Rosh Chodesh group. The names of the people that went were: Na'amah Bateman, Suzanne Bodian, Rebecca Karger, and Eryn London. We made hamentashen, decorated Shivitis and tried to reverse all of the male and female parts in the Purim story. In the future, we are going to try to do different *tzedakah* projects such as working at a soup kitchen. I was wondering if there were any other kids' Rosh Chodesh groups and if there were if they could call me at (201) 984-3913 or write to me.

Elizabeth Ochs
57 Fairmount Avenue
Morristown, NJ. 07960

LILITH FAVORITES

The Molly Picon article [Winter 1995] interested me particularly; now I'm curious to see her films and learn more about Yiddish film and theatre—it made them seem more sophisticated and less "heimish."

Joyce Goodman
New York, NY

YOM KIPPUR AND THE SILENCE AROUND INCEST

I began feeling very uncomfortable on Yom Kippur several years ago after I began having memories of incest as a very young child. It really concerned me that the traditional Torah portion for the *mincha* service, which contains the clearly stated prohibitions against incest, was omitted in favor of an alternate reading. My rabbi, who was very supportive, explained that he omitted this portion, the Holiness Codes, because they included the prohibition of homosexual intercourse, and he did not want to offend those members of the congregation. I agreed that I did not want to offend them either. However, back at home I knew I could not sit through another Yom Kippur without standing up for the children and clearly stating the prohibitions in our tradition against incest.

Out of that impulse came the following piece of writing. As it would not be comfortable for my family to actually have me say this from our *bimah* on Yom Kippur, I would like to say it anonymously in a public forum. Many rabbis could use these words or ideas to get this message across to their congregations even though they go ahead and choose the alternative Torah portion:

Mincha Message—Yom Kippur

The traditional Torah portion for the *mincha* service of Yom Kippur is the "Holiness Codes" and one of its messages is the prohitibion of incest in our community. I have survived incest and am overcoming its effects in my life. Before remembering this about four years ago, I had been told that incest didn't happen in Jewish families. However, in recovery I am able to tell you that it does happen, and I am not the only one. Incest is a topic that is very difficult for our communi-

ty to talk about. It tends to be one of the few remaining issues that are still "unspeakable." It took forty years for me to be able to let myself know that this happened, let alone talk to any one else about it.

It feels so good to know that our rabbis of old, in their wisdom, did not have this problem of science. They chose the holiest day of the year, when most people were in temple, to talk about this. They did it by choosing to read the portion of the Torah that tells us it's not okay for adults to sexually abuse our children.

Today, alternative Torah readings are printed in our High Holiday prayer books, and are frequently chosen by our rabbis. I know it's not comfortable to talk about this, but it's not comfortable to be sexually abused either. It is devastating! It distorts every aspect of your life experience, especially your relationships with your loved ones and with G-d. It does this even if you successfully manage to repress the memories, as many victims do. Because my great grandfather did not consider me or my needs when he abused me, I believed that was the truth about me—that I did not deserve to be considered and I did not deserve to have my needs met. I believed that I must be a despicable person if I was so undeserving, and I believed that I had to behave perfectly in every way just to be barely acceptable.

By choosing not to talk about incest and not to state the prohibitions clearly, we are discarding the ancient wisdom of tradition and we are condoning this shameful behavior. I need to stand up for our children and recite the words of Torah from Leviticus XVIII 1-6, 9-11, 17, 30.

Anonymous
California

SACRED OUTER SPACE?

Thanks for your wonderful, shocking, funny, deeply thoughtful piece replete with maps entitled "Paradoxes and Mysteries of Sacred Space." Concerning Map #4, "Sacred Wall," about women's prayers at the *Kotel*, under the Labor government a Knesset commission recommended that we be banished to pray outside the Old City Walls in a Muslim section of East Jerusalem. Get your map-makers ready. Either the Likud government will take our demand for public sacred prayer space seriously—or they'll banish us to Baghdad, Kabul, or outer space.

Phyllis Chesler
Brooklyn, NY

UP AGAINST THE WALL

My story is about Shavuot in Jerusulem—the holiday when we celebrate receiving our Torah at Sinai as a united people.

We began with *tefillot* and dinner at the Conservative Center at Agron Street, and went to other learning sessions around Jerusalem. Then around 4 AM, we all walked up to the Old City—we were literally going up to Jerusalem on the pilgrimage festival—it was awesome. Thousands of people were singing and dancing in the pre-dawn dark.

Once we got to the *Kotel*, the Western Wall, people joined the various *minyanim* that were there. I have participated in many egalitarian *minyanim* at the *Kotel* over the past three years—on Yom Kippur, Pesach, Shavuot, and other times. We usually have between 30 and 50 people and we form a close-knit circle in some out-of-the-way place in the plaza area behind the front section. We do not want to cause any trouble and I have never experienced any real problems, just occasional heckling—no big deal.

So, at 5:15, we began to *daven* in a small circle with about 50 people at the back right-hand corner of the plaza where the Israeli flags are. A few guys in *tallitot* (including myself) stood in the front so that others could not see the women in our *minyan* in *tallitot* and *kippot* and to prevent any possible problems. But as we went through the morning service, more and more people joined, so that when we finished *shaharit*, we had more than 125 people. After the morning service, we read the book of Ruth and since we were tired, people sat down and then others could see into our large circle. That's when the trouble began.

A group of ultra-Orthodox kids came by and began making noises. I went up to them and had an intelligent conversation with them about what we were doing and we debated the *halakhic* (Jewish law) sources. The most intelligent question came from a six-year-old boy, who asked me: "But, what do they (women) gain from wearing a *tallit*?" I had him read the section we recite as we put on the *tallit*, which speaks about God's great love for us. The *tallit* becomes a symbol for this love, and we wrap ourselves in the shade of God's wings. I asked him what he thought of this and he replied that it was very beautiful. I told him that that was exactly what they gained from wearing a *tallit*.

But soon afterwards, older *haredim* [ultra-Orthodox Jews] came and started to curse and shout at us. They attempted to prevent our prayer by booing and yelling and calling us sinners. They yelled the song *"v'hivdilanu min hato'im"*—who has separated us from those who err. When they got to the words "those who err," they pointed at us. Never again will that song conjure up thing in my mind but hate.

The *haredim* formed a and began pushing up aga us. I was pushed/punched several times. It was at time that I felt the situation dangerous. One *haredi* tried to infiltrate our circl steal our *sefer-Torah*! I wer the Border Police who g the entrance to the Wes Wall Plaza—they told me this was not their jurisdicti

I went into the main po headquarters nearby expec to find numerous offi working hard to prevent a rorist attack. Instead I fo more *minyanim davenn* Finally, on the top floor, w I expected the top-secret *K* security team to be, I four few officers smoking, drink coffee, and playing cards. I them that there was a dan ous security situation deve ing. They sent the lowest cer (he was not even allowe play in the card game!). checked out the situation ordered back-up.

We continued the To reading under guard and tinued shouts. I stood in wall we made to prevent *haredim* from coming into group. It was pretty rough.

A woman from a mod Orthodox *minyan* next to came over to ask the *hare* to be quiet. They were not disrupting our service, but were also interrupting th Then I saw the most disgus thing. The *haredim* spit all this woman; they just spit her. I was in shock.

I went into the middle of circle to get the *maftir al* and read the Haftorah. I rea fast and as loud as I could (I to be louder than our pro tors). When I got to the sec about seeing the Presence God, I felt a small rock hit in the shoulder and bounce my head. I could not believ

ıd been hit by rocks before
own by *haredim* in Mea
arim for standing too close
vomen during a tour, but, at
Kotel, how could they be
owing rocks at me now, and
e!!!! It took me a few sec-
s to regain my composure
continue. But I was deter-
ıed to go on and with even
re passion and *kavannah*.
I finished and we went on
ı the service. The police
re having trouble holding
k the *haredim* and wanted
get us out of there safely.
t before we left, my friend,
h Heller, yelled out the
urner's Kaddish. It was an
passioned prayer and a plea.
left traumatized.
Many in the group were
lerstandably angry. I was
. I just felt sad for the
vish people—we are so far
ay from redemption, unity,
peace. For me, I must
ouble my efforts to make
eral *halakhic* Judaism sur-
e, so that with God's help,
grand-daughters will be
e to *daven* at the *Kotel* with-
incidents. I hope you will
join in this struggle.

David Lerner
Jerusalem

ID IN THE BASEMENT

m writing in response to
elly Fredman's "Sacred
sement" in the Summer
96 issue. One of the white-
red ladies in the last row—
ıough it is hard to believe
is where she sits—is my
year-old grandmother, Mary
sler. My grandmother is a
g-time member at Bais
raham. She attended many
men's prayer services and
s proud that they took place
ıer *shul*. Grandma was the
who proudly told me about
rying the Torah on Simchat
ah. My grandmother is a
man who is never afraid to
ak her mind, an Orthodox
man who keeps a traditional
home (traditionally Jewish, she hates to cook) but is supportive and loving enough to her grandchildren that she walked down the aisle at my wedding to a non-Jewish man.

Esther Klevens (a white-haired women on the *bimah*) was also one of the strong women in my life. Mrs. Klevens taught me the Hebrew alphabet song that my two-year-old son now sings in the car. She also gave me the gift of a siddur on the occasion of my Bat Mitzvah in 1975, which I now proudly use every Shabbat when I make *Kiddush* for my family. Thank you for printing this article that stirred some of my favorite memories of living in St. Louis.

Morissa Stuhlman Fregeau
Yellow Springs, OH

A CONVERT'S REGRETS

I am a convert to Judaism. I have found myself increasingly dissatisfied with the half-hearted observance that is the norm at this suburban *shul*. I feel lonely when I feel I have to apologize to *Jewish* friends for being *shomer shabbos* or keeping kosher, or when I *daven* in my synagogue longing to be surrounded by passion and commitment instead of inattention, or when I *daven* alone in the women's section of an Orthodox *shul*, minus my *tallit* and *tefillin*, where I cannot touch the Torah I love.

I feel even lonelier when I listen to an Orthodox rabbi tell me that to be accepted in an Orthodox conversion I must "believe" that women's place is in the home. "And where does that leave me?" I ask him. Single, 42, no children, a career woman, financially independent. My choices were made long before I became Jewish. Barring miracles of biblical proportion, a family and a dozen children are not part of my future.

Mary Ellen McCarthy
Rut Miriam bat Avraham
v'Sarah
Atlantic Highlands, NJ

MALE-LESS MUSIC

Re: "Popular Music" by Rahel Musleah [Winter 1995-1996], two comments:

First, Musleah wrote that singer Fran Avni left Israel "to be near her aging parents." I would have preferred that she state simply that Fran Avni was once "a popular Israeli performer in the 1970's" and left it at that! I have lived in Israel for 20 years and have watched people come and go. The mere existence of Israel seems to have created a major guilt complex in Jews all over. We seem to feel that Israel is the homeland and if we do not physically dwell on "her" soil then we are not good Jews. Israelis, especially, have difficulty leaving because of the overriding feeling of betrayal of their homeland and fellow Jews.

Second, I have been a member of the band Tofa'ah since it was founded by Yona (Saslow) Yacabovitch 15 years ago. I was pleased (and surprised) that your author looked positively upon the *halakhic* ruling of *kol ishah* [a woman's voice should not be heart by men], stating that we have "channeled the prohibition positively by performing solely for female audiences." Performing for female audiences is definitely a positive experience well worth trying for those who might frown upon it. We are women finding and promoting our female voice and identity both in secular and feminist circles in Israel, as well as in the Orthodox world.

Thank you for bringing to light all the women who are leading us out of Jewish music male-dominated bondage!

Ann (Silverman) Limor

CORRECTION: In Spring 1996, the correct e-mail address in the Tsena Rena listing for Eva Metzger Brown, project director of Intergenerational Healing of Holocaust Families, reaching out to grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, should have been embrown@psych.umass.edu

MOVING?

Be sure to let us know.
Send a copy of your magazine label, and your new address, or write to:

LILITH, Dept. LIL. P.O. Box 3000
Denville, NJ 07834.

Don't miss an issue of LILITH!

An age old Jewish tradition for good luck in your home
KITCHEN Perfect Hostess & Housewarming Gift
MEZUZA Hanukkah & Year Round
MAGNET

Wheat Salt Sugar & Vintage Coin with Blessing $10
RIVA-ISMS 2705 1/2 Glendower Ave LA CA 90027
(213) 660-9171 or TOLL FREE 1-888-RING 4 ME RIVA

Advertising in LILITH pay

For rate information call
Leslie Margulies at (212) 757-0818

New! Creative Shab
Table Lin

Tablecloths, place
napkins, and
Featuring co
Shabbat mo
candles, challah
glass, prayer
Handscreen
by Suzanne F
100% c
Machine wash
Write or c
free color broc
DREIDEL DE
350 Bay St. #
San Francisco, CA
415/436
Dreideldes@ao

Also: Patchwork Dreidel Comforter for

hand painted silk tallitot for women and men of all ages

Artist Nancy Katz creates beautiful one-of-a-kind ritual objects of finest jacquard silk.

the eye of the needle

Write or call for brochure
Box 11215 ◆ Berkeley, CA 94701
510/843-5280

The Heirloom Huppah

Wedding canopies designed and handquilted by artist
Custom designed models using your favorite colors
A family heirloom and suitable for wall hanging
Various prices
Great wedding gift

For Brochure and color photos send $2:
Suzanne R Neusner
735 Fourteenth Avenue N E
St Petersburg, Florida 33701
813-821 8002

Journey of a Sou

Original Judaic
Music of
Celebration
& Healing
Sharon Wech
performer, compos

Write or call
to order:
RR3 Shaker Hts
Pittsfield, MA
(413)443-0175
Cassette $10.0

Journey of Our So

Performances & Workshops led
Jewish Educator and Musician,
Sharon Wechter

Using Music, Art & Midrash
Exploring the Spirit of Judaism

CALLING JEWISH WOMEN ARTISTS!

LILITH has just created a registry of Jewish women artists/craftspeople as part of our **Jewish Women's Talent Bank**. Contact us if you want information on ordering Ketubah for your wedding, or a Chuppah, a cup for Miriam for your Seder, Kiddush Cups, Tallit/Kippot, Mezuzot, Papercuts, Calligraphy, Blessing Shields, "Womenorahs"— you name it and LILITH can put you in touch with a gifted artist who makes it. Call LILITH at (212) 757-0818 or fax (212) 757-5705. If you are an artist/artisan, please send samples or photos of you work: LILITH, Suite 2432, 250 W. 57th St., NYC, NY, 10107.

Glorious Crowns®

New From Harwin Studios! Rainbow Crowns for Children—Available now

ELEGANT KIPPOT FOR CONTEMPORARY JEWISH WOMEN

Glorious Crowns have been designed by Sara Harwin in the Bokharan style. Each hat is made of fine European embroidered ribbon on Ultrasuede. Many colors and sizes available.

Glorious Crowns® by

Harwin Studios
9101 SW 15 Ave
Portland, Oregon
97219
(503) 245-8900
(503) 246-7479

Twelve Trives of Israel

Need an Inspirational Gift?

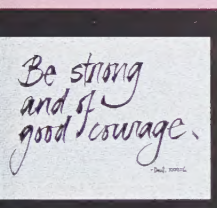
For Your Husband
A uniquely embroidered atarah and corners for his tallit.

For the Wedding
A silk painted huppah or challah cover.

For the Bar Mitzvah
A custom designed tallit embroidered with a favorite prayer or psalm.

For the Bat Mitzvah
A custom designed tallit set made especially for today's modern Jewish woman created by you with my help.

Ruth Leah Designs
Coral Springs, Florida
1 (800) 752-9323



From the Heart of Spiritual Wisdom

- Notecards to express a range of feelings and emotions
- Holiday greetings with depth

✦ ✦ ✦

12 Blank Notecards: $18

Sirota Rosenthal Productions
70 Brookside Drive. Hamden CT 06517
203.281.5854

Send $3 for samples and brochure (applicable to first order) or call for information.

Buying & Selling

SCHOLARLY BOOKS & GERMAN JUDAICA

SCHOEN BOOKS

7 Sugarloaf St., South Deerfield
MA 01373
(413)665-0066
(413)665-0069 fax
schoen@TriScho.jpr.com

Invitations Ketubot • Gifts

Send for new color brochure

Peggy H. Davis Calligraphy
Adamsville Rd. Colrain MA 01340
413-624-3204 • phd @ crocker.com
http://www.crocker.com/~ganeydn

****NEW** THE MATRIARCHAL SHIN ©**
Wear proudly Jewish feminist clothing!
Purple, red, & yellow background
White cotton/for girls & women
Short sleeve $18 + $3 postage

Jackie Olenick
✡ Judaic Artmaking
Fun Clothing & Lithos
1117 Lincoln Av, St. Paul MN 55105
(800)484-6901 - Pin #8354
Also: MIRIAM & SHE IS A TREE of LIFE

VOICES FOR PLURALISM AND INCLUSIVENESS IN ISRAEL

Mercaz represents Conservative (Masorti) Judaism in Israel with representatives to the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel—in proportion to the number of its members. These international bodies serve as a parliament of the Jewish people, making policy and disbursing funds. Mercaz annual dues are $15 for individuals, $25 for a family, and $5 for students, and are tax deductible. *Mercaz, U.S.A., 155 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; (212)533-7800 x2016.*

The Association of Reform Zionists of America represents Reform Judaism in Israel and sponsors synagogues, schools, and community centers in Israel. Membership is $36 per year, $5 for students. *ARZA, 838 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10021; (212) 249-0100.*

The Israel Women's Network is a nonprofit organization that lobbies for women's rights in the Knesset and offers programs to promote women's participation in Israeli political life. Members pay $48 per year (unsalaried persons, $36), and receive the quarterly newsletter in Hebrew or English. *IWN, P.O. Box 3171, Jerusalem, Israel; 972-2-439966, fax 972-2-435976.*

REBUILDING BLACK CHURCHES

Jewish organizations are collecting funds for restoration, organizing visits, forwarding letters, supporting legislation for federal prosecution of the arsonists and offering prayers on behalf of the burnt churches. Your check to "Help Rebuild the Churches Fund" may be sent to: *American Jewish Committee, 165 E. 56t St., New York, NY 10022; American Jewish Congress, 15 E. 84th St., NY, NY 10028, Anti-Defamation League, 823 UN Plaza, NY, NY 10017; Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 838 Fifth Ave, NY, NY 10021; or United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, 155 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10010.*

FOR JEWS IN JAIL

A marriage enrichment program for Jewish prisoners and their spouses trains them in relationship enhancement, discussion skills, problem and conflict resolution and self-changing guidelines. Over 100 couples have participated in the last six years and in 1997 a Parenting Seminar for those with small children will be offered. These are projects of a non-profit organization that serves the unique needs of Jews in prison, the military and "anywhere else where they and their families may become isolated from their heritage." *The Aleph Institute, 9500 Collins Ave. P.O. Box 547127, Surfside, FL 33154; (305) 865-5553, fax (305) 864-5675; http://www.aleph.institute.*

International Coalition for Jewish Prisoner Services, a volunteer organization, publishes letters, articles and lists of support services in The Coalition News. Contributions make possible their outreach as a resource center, clearinghouse and referral agency. *ICJPS, B'nai B'rith International, 1640 Rhode Island Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.*

HOME-SCHOOLIN

The Parent Connection he parents be "Jewish teachers" their kids. Early childhood k include activity/discussion guides for each of 30 recom mended books (available in stores); libraries may lend books and guides to families $50 each from *Bureau of Jewish Education, 333 Nahanton St., Newton MA 02159; (617)965-7350.*

The Jewish Homeschooler Newsletter publishes perso stories, book reviews, holida recipes and craft ideas for Jewish families-of all denom nations-who teach their chil dren at home. Sample $3; su scriptions $12. Payable to *Marilyn Lowe, Jewish Homeschooling Network, 12 Marshall Dr., SE, Salem, OR 97302; (503)362-1203.*

RAPE/ HARRASSMENT

"It's Not OK: Let's Talk About Domestic Violence" a video for professionals wo ing with children who witne domestic violence and is an attempt to help children find constructive and safe ways t respond to the reality of rec ring violence. (It is not mea for stand-alone, home enter-

DON'T THROW IT OUT!

The Secular Yiddish School in America Collection documents the four networks of schools (primarily afternoon and weekend schools) that were established in North America by the mid 1920's: the *Arbeiter Ring* of the socialist Workmen's Circle, the *Farband* of the Labor Zionist Jewish National Workers Alliance, the apolitical Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute, and the *Ordn* of the communist International Workers Order. A resource for scholars of second language learning, multiculturalism, immigration policy and bilingual education, as well as for teachers of Yiddish, the collection is seeking contributions of curricular materials in Yiddish and English, souvenir and graduation journals, memoirs, photographs, student and teacher notebooks, board meeting minutes, and material on philosophy and pedagogy. Contact *Margaret Kimball, Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, CA 94305-6004.*

Pictures, toys, poems, stories created by children during the Holocaust are sought for a permanent collection and exhibit for the new museum to open in Battery Park City in 1997. Contact *Sheba Skirball, Museum of Jewish Heritage, 342 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10173; (212) 687-9141,*

The Jewish Gay Lesbian, Bisexual and Transsexual Archives (JGLTA) is comprised of newspaper and magazine articles, posters, videos, CD, audiocassettes, brochures, T-shirts, *kippot* and hundreds of books about Jews with alternative sexualities. Johnny Abush, who has assembled over 7,000 artifacts and database, is seeking to transfer the collection from his apartment to a permanent home. Contact him also regarding items to add: *Johnny Abush, 50 Alexander St. #1407, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 1B6; (416) 929-6873 or via e-mail at faygelah@astral.magic.ca; http://www.magic.ca/-faygelah/Index.html*

TO YOUR HEALTH

Malignant melanoma is the most common cancer among women 25 to 29 years old, and early detection can save your life. A free brochure includes a body map, instructions for self examination and shows the warning signs of all major skin cancers. Send a SASE to *The Skin Cancer Foundation, Box 561, Dept. SE, New York, NY 10156; (212) 725-5176; fax (212) 725-5751.*

Gaucher Disease is a rare inherited enzyme deficiency that occurs with a high prevalence in the Ashkenazi Jewish population. "Current Issues in Diagnosis and Treatment" is a free brochure you can order from *National Institute of Health Consensus Program Information Service, P.O. Box 2577, Kensington, MD 20891; (800) 644-6627; fax (301) 816-2494; texts available also on the internet: http://text.nlm.nih.gov*

Ashkenazi Jews who have had symptoms of schizophrenia—which include hallucinations, emotional impairment, paranoia, lack of motivation, and inability to experience pleasure—are sought for a new study trying to locate genes that contribute to the development of the distorder and to find better treatments for it. (There is no indication yet that schizophrenia occurs more frequently in this or any other ethnic racial or religious population.) Researchers at Johns Hopkins University Hospital will interview participants and take blood samples. All information will be kept completely confidential. Call *Dr. Ann Pulver toll-free at (888) 289-4095. (Baltimore residents call 410-955-0455).*

Give Your Lungs a Religious Experience—"This Shabbos light candles not cigarettes" is a Jewish awareness advertising campaign of the National Jewish Outreach Program that expands the American Cancer Society's

"Great American Smokeout" to a once-a-week experience by appealing to both physical and spiritual concerns. The NJOP brochure, "12 Things to Do While You're not Smoking on Shabbos," is available from the *National Jewish Outreach Program, 485 Fifth Ave., #701, New York, NY 10017; (212) 986-7450. E-mail to njop@worldplaza.com*

nment or broadcast media.) 5 plus $3.95 (S&H). *blication Orders, American r Association, P.O. Box 892, Chicago, IL 60610.*

Reference Card for Rabbis how to help individuals and nilies cope with family vioce gives clues to recognizvictims of family violence l lists available resources to ist clergy in intervention. der from *UJA Federation eragency Task Force on mily Violence, c/o FEGS, 00 Jericho Tpk., Syosset, NY 791.*

pe: Do you ever get over For a book on the longn effects of rape on adult men, if you are a survivor rape and would be willing to nplete a confidential questnnaire (no matter how long the rape occurred or ether or not it was report-, please call *(800) 221-6411 write Artemis Research, . Box 26005, Shoreview, 55126-0005.*

ndling harrassment. ase send success stories of how you have coped for a book on this subject to the author *Helen Forelle,Women Against Sexual Harassment, P.O. Box 164, Canton, SD 57013-0164; (605) 987-5070.*

A WORD FOR KIDS

The Lisa Libraries have supplied new copies of children's books that were donated by authors and editors to budget-crunched social service organizations and have established children's book libraries in 58 locations in the U.S. and some overseas. *Baby Sitters Club* author Ann Martin and her assistant Elisa Geleibter founded this project in memory of children's book editor Lisa Novak, who was killed by an intruder in 1990. They ship nearly 400 books a week to battered women's shelters, foster care organizations, walk-in centers for runaways and prisoners. You can send new books—or suggest a needy organization—by contacting: *The Lisa Libraries, c/o Peter F. Reilly, Inc. 491 Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY 11217.*

A "Read In" for National Jewish Book Month. In November children can get family, friends and neighbors to contribute money for each book they read, and thereby raise funds to help meet the special needs of the Jewish blind and increase communal awareness. *Jewish Braille Institute of America, 110 E. 30th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 889-2525.*

Children's literature in Israel is the theme of the Spring/Summer 1996 (new series #16) of Modern Hebrew Literature, an English-language publication. It features a historical survey from the country's didactic beginnings to its current flowering, and eleven excerpts and mini-biographies of contemporary writers such as Ruth Almog, Irit Amit, Daniella Carmi, Nira Harel, Dorit Orgad, Yael Rosman and Yona Tepper. Annual subscriptions are $12; single copies are $6. *The Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature, Steimatzky House, 11 Hakishon St., Bnei Brak, Israel; 972-3-579-6830; fax 972-3-579-6832.*

Reading Ruach is a bimonthly newsletter created by Susan Spector and Jill Kassander with information on new books for the Jewish classroom and suggested lesson plans. Recent themes have been folk tales, award-winning books, biographies, and books on the Holocaust. Subscriptions are $24 per year (add $5 outside the U. S.); back issues are $5. The Reading Ruach Book Club offers schools and families an opportunity to purchase books for young readers. *Reading Ruach, P.O Box 411302, St. Louis, MO 63141-1302.*

The Sugarman Family Award for Jewish Children's Literature will award $750 for a book for children ages 3-16 published in the United States. After the competition submissions will be available to the public for research and study as part of a special collection at the District of Columbia Jewish Community Center library. Guidelines from *DCJCC, 1836 Jefferson Pl. NW, Washington DC 20036; (202) 775-1765; fax (202) 331-7667.*

-compiled by Naomi Danis

LIBERATING GOD

Photo by Pacita Leung

ARTIST HELENE AYLON EDITS GENESIS WITH HER PINK MAGIC MARKER

Standing in front of her work, "The Liberation of G-D," artist Helene Aylon has been spotted: 30 women from Long Island on a tour of the Jewish Museum's multi-artist exhibit "Too Jewish?" descend, showering her with gratitude and admiration. They are glowing.

Aylon's work has had a powerful effect on women. Her new show, which travels to the San Francisco Jewish Museum in November, quite literally underscores their absence in the Torah; it also posits that the cruelty and vengefulness attributed to God are in fact a creation of man. With pink highlighter in hand, she has marked the five books of the Torah to "liberate" God from every assumption that this text put forth. She writes,

I begin the liberation of
G-D
Searching in the five books of Moses
For the sections where
G-D
Has been spoken for.
I look into the passages
where patriarchal attitudes
have been projected onto
G-D
as though man
has the right to have
dominion
even over
G-D.

I highlight onto the parchment / that covers each page; / between words in the empty spaces / where a female presence has been omitted / . . . and I highlight over words of / vengeance, deception, cruelty, and misogyny, / words attributed to / G-D.

The result is, true to its title, liberating. Through a double arch of purple velvet curtains, you enter a quiet space filled with highlighted texts ready to be studied: a feminist *beit midrash*. The five books of Moses, in English and Hebrew, sit on velvet-covered stands. Each page is covered with translucent parchment that must be smoothed down in order to read the text. The sound of crinkling parchment, prerecorded and played back on a sound track, grows louder as visitors gather to study the texts.

One woman asks the artist if the wavy parchment is reminiscent of the sea. Aylon smiles. "That is beautiful," she says. "Thank you." She explains her own reasons for choosing the material: parchment emphasizes timelessness; it protects the text; it buckles, making the text below cloudy at first, and then clear. Finally, the parchment makes a crisp noise as the pages are turned. "I am interested in sound," says Aylon, "in the ways that sounds can awaken, like the *shofar.*"

It is an awakening of consciousness that Aylon hopes to initiate with her pink pen. Every time the text reads,"And God said to Moses," Aylon highlights it, questioning. Every time the text lists a father begetting a son, Aylon adds a pink "There must have been great women," she the group, "but they are lost in this book, th not here."

Raised an Orthodox Jew in Brook Borough Park neighborhood, Aylon has eng in Torah study all her life. She still read Torah aloud to her mother, nearly blind, she returns to her Brooklyn home. But whe began a decade ago to create her own midra what she calls a "visual theology"—her fa was not pleased. Her mother "thought it wa rible," Aylon recalls. "But now it's in the Je Museum, so that makes it kosher." Aylon's cation of the work, to her fifth grade teache to the principal of the Shulamith Schoo Girls, in Borough Park, reflects both Orthodoxy and her doubt: "In those days, in lives, while instilling a love of *Chumash* and *Rashi,* they also en aged Borough Park girls to ask questions."

A self-defined eco-feminist, Aylon over the years has focuse work on nuclear disarmament, environmental disaster, the Leb war and women in the former Soviet Union. She also consistentl used it to build bridges between communities of women. In 198 brought Israeli and Arab women together to gather stones in sac an Arab area of Haifa: The sacks were for the wandering Jew stones for the common ground between the women. In 1982 she bridged a divide, creating two miles of pillow cases that bore dr and nightmares written by American and Soviet women.

When "The Liberation of G-D" opened at the Jewish Museu New York in March, Aylon was prepared for controversy. At th of her exhibit she placed a white notebook, to give visitors a ch to respond. One wrote, "If you don't like the Torah, go read an book." More often, people offered praise: "I thank you for mysel grandmothers, and my mother, but mostly for my two daughter

Hours after the Long Island tour left the museum, a young reading through Aylon's highlighted texts approached her with gratulations and then asked, "Why concentrate on the bad, on w missing? Why not celebrate the good?" Aylon answered with a "My nephew, a rabbi, asks me the same thing. I tell him I did th my life, I just can't ignore it all anymore."

— *Ilana Sta*